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HOLIDAY 2001



PACKED WITH THE YEAR'S BEST GAMESHARK CODES



Over 2500 GameShark codes to help you beat the game and enhance your play!

Booyeah! GameShark codes for the Game Boy® Advance are here!



CODEBOY'S RAN

Um, where am I? Why am I upside-down?
Oh, we're right side up; IGN is upside down.
I get it.

Anyway, for you GameShark veterans, this should be the largest collection of PS2 GameShark2 codes in one edition, as well as the debut of the Game Boy Advance GameShark. For those of you that are receiving this from the IGN side, you're in for something new. Don't tell me you don't have a GameShark yet. Yeah, I'm sure that you can play the game on your own, really I am, but just in case, wouldn't you want to have a few codes, unlock a few extras, play a few unfinished levels? How about if there's something hidden or completely inaccessible in a game? What, you don't think it was made that way for a reason, do you? Just take a look through all these codes to get a idea of what kind of freedom using a GameShark can give you.

Not only is this issue of GameShark Magazine the debut of the new GameBoy Advance GameShark codes, it's also con-

Adding with the release of two new systems, Nintendo's GameCube and the Microsoft Xbox. The PS2 is going strong, the GBA is still new, and even the Dreamcast still has a few great titles coming out. I imagine that most of your friends will be receiving McDonald's gift certificates for Christmas this year and you'll get a low cut-off notices from the utility companies, as almost all of your money will be spent on new games, used games, new systems, and Twinkies. I'm sure they all understand though, just be sure to invite them over to play once or twice and they'll forget all about the cheap gifts.

Myself, I'm in a different dilemma; I can't find the time to hack all of these games, or at least not in a normal day. So I've decided just to move into the office until Christmas and pay someone to take care of my dogs. I still call them on the phone, but in the time it takes to get to my house and back to the office, which is only twenty-six miles, round trip, it seems that another thirteen or so games have come out. This is, of course,

good for you, more choices, more titles, more codes, but bad for me as I now have resorted to the catheter/colostomy bag combo so that I don't even have to leave my desk anymore.

Granted, no one will come near me, but that's just an added bonus, even less distraction from hacking codes now. And just think, you fans out there who don't know what a GameShark is are missing all of this fun, drop the magazine right now and go get yourself a GameShark, I'm not doing this to myself just for the sheer enjoyment.

With love,
-CodeBow

Contact Us At:
GameShark
335 Clubhouse Lane
Hunt Valley, MD 21030-1407

PLAYSTATION 2

Arctic Thawing

[illegible]

measured Core 2

[illegible]

Care boosters
page 106

[illegible]

Factorial Black Country

[illegible]

PLATE 10

[illegible][illegible][illegible]

Arvey Men Gen

Must Be On	10
Unusable	30
Offender Gas Strike	10
Army Men 5	
Must Be On	10
Unusable	30
Offender Info	10
E. Lovels	30
E. Neopans	30
SEGA MODE1	30
Offender Health	30
Offender Name	30
Bloody K	
Must Be On	10
Unusable Extra Modes	40
Unusable Extra Modes	40
Unusable Death ONEM	40
Unusable Death	40

1. *Journal of the American Medical Association*, 1997; 277: 1039-1043.

	Low Speed Mode ONLY	High Speed Mode ONLY
Basic Mode ONLY	40	40
Basic Mode ONLY	40	40
AFire	40	40
Bakuryu	40	40
Buzzsaw	40	40
Dialo	40	40
Jenny	40	40
Ling	40	40
Sahvi	40	40
Shenlong	40	40
Xion	40	40
Suan	40	40
Griks	40	40
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Allion	40	40
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Casper Sp Dr

(1) MUST Be On

(2) Must Be On

Figure 1

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Coleus Coleoides

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Albany	NY	1993	40
Albany	NY	1994	40
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Albany	NY	2086	40
Albany	NY	2087	40
Albany	NY	2088	

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[illegible]

H. Cole, M.

3579C	K. Jones
3679C	S. Nettiah
3809C	S. Nettiah
3809C	T. Parker
3ET4E	A. Tiggler
3ET4E	J. Duggan
3ET4E	J. Duggan
3ET4E	T. Richard
3ET4E	T. Richard
3ET4E	Plenty D.
3ET4E	(M) Must
3ET4E	Infante F
3ET4E	Max Carl
3ET4E	Big. Smith

IPC: 68-4.3-10
 PZ: 4.3-10

PC900	1.5-Ultra
PC950	1.5-MemPro
PC100	Asul, Asul
PC1066	Asul, Asul
PC133	BO, Jase
PC14100	Genus
PC14400	Genus
PC1500	Genus
PC1600	Genus
PC1666	Genus
PC1700	Genus
PC1733	Genus
PC1800	Genus
PC1866	Genus
PC1933	Genus
PC2000	Genus
PC2100	Genus
PC2133	Genus
PC2166	Genus
PC2200	Genus
PC2266	Genus
PC2333	Genus
PC2400	Genus
PC2466	Genus
PC2500	Genus
PC2533	Genus
PC2566	Genus
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PC2800	Genus
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PC3000	Genus
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PC3100	Genus
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PC89	

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Crazy Taxi
in DC90Y7E2H40C
Time 4C3A4973C145E
to 128A4870C145E
to 4C3E3A78145E

KEYWORDS: SCATTERING; LATTICES

[illegible]

Damon, Mirra, BME 3



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You asked for it, and now you have it: IGN.com The Magazine is finished! The only thing left is for me to write the Letter from the Editor. This is the time I'm supposed to be all profits and junk and tell you a bit about the mag. Unfortunately, it's three in the morning and all I can say after helping to get IGN.com's very first multiplatform magazine out the door is, "man, am I ever tired." Although we did an IGN64 mag in the past, this is our virgin effort at a multi-platform magazine, but after many a late night, I think we have something that we're pretty happy with.

Think of this Buyer's Guide as your roadmap to gaming Nirvana for the holiday season. There are so many new games on IGN each day that it's easy to lose touch with everything that's coming out. Think of us as a matchmaker - we're going to make it as easy as possible for you to make the right choice when it comes to what system (or systems as the case may be), games, and accessories are right for you or the people on your shopping list.

We've broken down the strengths and weaknesses of each gaming system, detailed our picks for the best games to choose for the holidays, and even given you a checklist of games we're looking forward to into the coming year. All this and a smattering of features, hot DVD picks, and nearly 3,000 review scores means this one magazine will arm you for any game-related buying situation you may get into this holiday season.

Anyway, we hope we inform as well as entertain you with our print endeavors, and who knows - you may just be seeing another IGN.com The Magazine in the future.

Tal Blevins

Tal Blevins

IGN's 2001 BUYER'S GUIDE

HARDWARE SPECS | TOP 10 GAMES | FUTURE OUTLOOKS

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Cover art by Dave Wilek



Jak and Daxter the Precursor Legacy

Everything you need to know about Naughty Dog's next adventure, including details on the characters, the world and much more.

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Unbel-evil-able

Bloodthirsty zombies, carnage, and all of the gruesome details you can't live without – we break down Resident Evil's exclusive trip to GameCube!

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Microsoft as a Gaming Company

Follow the evolution of the Xbox from the first official announcement at GDC 2000 to launch and beyond.

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Cheap Ass Games For Cheap Ass Gamers

Bargain hunter alert! Nearly 20 games for under 20 dollars sure to please any PC gamer on your holiday shopping list.

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THE MAGAZINE STAFF

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ABOUT THE DISK

If there's one thing we've learned over the last four years of working at IGN, then it's this: you like codes. Whether it's tips, tricks, guides or cheats, you gobble up our updates on codes.ign.com faster than we can post them. Since our codes are more limited than websites when it comes to space, we figured we'd offer something better than just a few printed cheat lists. That's why we partnered with Interlic, the makers of the popular GameShark cheat device. These guys have called cheating to an art form. Unless your little brother has already swiped it, this magazine comes with your very own GameShark Demo disk, packed with the latest codes and game saves for your favorite games. Just put it in your PlayStation® or PlayStation® 2 and the disk will do the rest. Enjoy.

:: GAMESHARK® SAMPLER

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Author: [kinggamerduke](#)
Posts: 322
Registered: Oct 01

Date Posted: 3:01am
Does anyone know where I can get the invincibility code for Twisted Metal: Black?

h4x0rphr34k:
Posts: 2455
Registered: Mar 01

Date Posted: 3:02am
if i7 w4z up j00r 455 j00'd kn0w wh47 i7 w4z
-----signature-----
SO 1337 3v3n my m0n 6035e7 kn0w wh0 i 4m!!!!!!

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With our simple "Become an IGN Editor-in-Chief" kit, you too can get a feeling for what life is like at the IGN offices, at least through the eyes of IGNPS2 EIC Douglass "Captain Insano" Perry.

Fig.1



Step 1: Carefully cut out the picture of Doug Perry.

Step 2: Attach a string or long rubber band to Doug Perry's face and tie it around your head. We can't stress this enough people: **DO NOT** staple, tack, or nail Doug Perry's face to your head.

Step 3: Act completely insane. A good starting point is to run around the room screaming "Hoo hoo, whatever, buddy! Scootie! Hoo hoo! Your mom's a scootie, buddy! Hoo hoo hoo" in a high-pitched voice. Once you become genuinely feared by those around you, you'll have transcended to the rank of an IGN Editor-in-Chief!

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Whether it's a question about videogames, movies, comics, or the whereabouts of IGNcube Editor-in-Chief Matt Casamassina, you can bet that the IGN editors know the answer to your questions (well, maybe not the whereabouts of Matt Casamassina, but chances are we can help you with anything else). Here's just a sampling of the thousands of emails we receive every day at IGN...

DVD :: SUPER BIT, SUPERLAME?

What is it with the Superbit Collection?

Granted most of what I see needing a new release is getting one, but *Crouching Tiger, Hidden Dragon*? That's a pretty good disc, almost like a bit dark, not bad on ratings, clarity, and the like.

Is there any reason to put out a double disc so soon after the initial release?

— Rob Misk

Steven responds: The Superbit collection of DVDs, which includes *CTHD*, *Desperado*, *The Fifth Element*, *Air Force One* (and more) essentially are for people with high-end A/V equipment. By removing all of the extras content from the DVD, the video engineers are able to nearly double the bit rate which helps provide superior video and audio presentation. This is mainly in response to the new line of progressive scan DVD players. So, unless you have a progressive scan DVD player and a HDTV, you won't see much video difference. However, you will hear a richer soundtrack as most of the titles will use the DTS format, a bit rate space hog on traditional DVDs. Benjamin Fergold of Columbia TriStar says about Superbit: "Standard DVDs are like fully loaded luxury automobiles. In contrast, Superbit DVDs are like Formula One racers — built for pure performance. We believe that DVD enthusiasts will be thrilled with this exciting new concept." I guess so, that is if you are thrilled to spend more money for a DVD with very few, if any, extras for a better soundtrack and a video presentation that few will be able to enjoy this early in the game.

DVD :: RETURN TO EVERGREEN TERRACE

Hi, I was just wondering if you knew when Fox plans to release the complete second season of *The Simpsons*. Is there any set pattern for releasing the discs (i.e. every six months)?

— Matt Ross

Steven responds: Personally, I'm waiting for seasons five through eight. Those were the Golden Years. Still, as of this writing, Fox has set no definite release date for the second season. If you look at the X-Files release schedule (another high-profile Fox release), you'll see these come out every six months or so. Matt Groening reported to IGN at this year's Comic-Con that they had already record commentaries for season one of *Futurama* and that the first set of *Futurama* DVDs would come out in early 2002. Since the two shows have such a high audience crossover, my guess is that Fox will space out the DVD release of *Futurama* and *The Simpsons* so they don't overlap with each other in the market. There are rumors that *Futurama* will hit the street in mid-February, so you could very well expect *The Simpsons* Season Two in your Easter basket.

DC :: DREAMCAST DREAMING

Hey Anthony, I had this dream that I was in the IGN office and I asked you why Sega sold so few maracas for Samba de Amigo and you said that it didn't matter because you knew of a website that had 30 sets in stock and they were only \$40 each. Just thought I would share.

— Matt K

Anthony responds: You know, I had a similar dream... well sorta. I dreamed that I came into work at IGN

one day and everyone was playing games on the Dreamcast. Tal was wearing a three-piece suit. Fraz busted out some funky rhymes. Dave Z. was fawning Britney Spears on his couch, and the Reverend David Smith was preaching around the office tossing diabolicals everywhere. Oh, and Yip Neko was working next to me putting the finishing touches on NIGHTS for Dreamcast.



DC :: DO YOU DO VOODOO TOO?

Ooga Booga is by far the best online game I've ever played... and it's totally free. The only problem is, I only see ten people or so on the servers. I say, ditch PS2 and join the new online bandwagon, Ooga Booga! I do have Phantasy Star Online V.2 on pre-order, but Ooga Booga is totally free online... and so much fun. Buy today, play tonight... and tomorrow... and next week...

— Clayton C.

Anthony responds: Well, that's a pretty strong statement when you stated, "ditch PS2," considering that there are over 200,000 players online at any given time. But I'm glad there are people out there who are willing to go out on a limb to discover the fun of Ooga Booga, especially online. Dreamcast owners who haven't tried this game out, you don't need to... just get it!



GCN :: LIGHTING THE EVIL

Does Resident Evil for GameCube have pre-rendered backgrounds? If this is so, how do the lighting effects cast shadows that are displaced on the corners of walls?

— Blake L.

Fran responds: The remake of *Resident Evil* for GameCube does indeed use pre-rendered back-

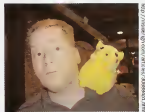
grounds, but it's not the pre-rendered look you may be used to. Everything is displayed at full resolution and is of the highest quality. In addition to that the backgrounds are now animated - flames from the fireplace will lick the made of the chimney and grass outside the mansion will sway in the wind. As you point out the lighting and shadowing is all real-time, but still costs on these pre-rendered walls. This is done using a 3D wireframe model of the walls that tells the lighting and shading where and how to fall. There's obviously a more detailed explanation than that, but we're not rocket scientists, you know.

GCN :: CHEAP LOGIC

After reading about Star Wars Rogue Leader's support of Delay Pro Logic II I have become eager to purchase a receiver that supports it. The cheapest I can find is around \$250. Is there any more affordable way to enjoy the benefits of this new technology, or am I going to have to pay more than the GameCube itself costs just to hear all the sound it is capable of?

— Jonathan

Fran responds: \$250 is about as cheap as it's going to get for some time, I'm afraid. You're going to need a receiver that can send audio to all five of your speakers and super-cool regardless, so there's no beating around that bush. All things considered \$250 is a great deal. Remember that currently only Star Wars Rogue Leader Rogue Squadron II supports Pro Logic II, so don't feel rushed to buy a new setup just for that. Though, if you can afford it, the benefits are many because Delay Pro Logic II nicely enhances regular Dolby Surround (whatmost in Luigi's Mansion, Wave Race, Blue Storm, Extreme G.I., and more). So Pro Logic II is worthwhile regardless.



GBA :: GIMME AN "A"

Not even three months after purchasing my prized Game Boy Advance I have found that my A button isn't functioning properly. I generally play my only game, *Rayman Advance*, but sometimes switch with a few of my friends. I've noticed that my A button isn't responding when I press it. Which is annoying because it will work when I jump up but when I press again to do that helicopter thing, I'll miss my platform. Has anyone else had this problem? Is it just my gamecube or is it my GBA? It would be a pain to drive out of town to the repair shop. I'm hoping you can help out.

— Icecoldskate

Craig responds: Generally speaking, it's never the individual game's fault if a button doesn't seem to work. Of course, it doesn't hurt to try a different game to see if your A button is functioning. If it does work in other games, you'll have to contact Nintendo's customer service to get your system repaired... the information is on the back of your system on the battery cover.

Q&A :: DUST GETS IN YOUR EYES

I have a Game Boy Advance, and I got what I think is dust under my screen. What should I do, and will this damage my Game Boy?

— Fox

Craig responds: It's unfortunate when it happens, but dust can and will get into your Game Boy Advance system and lead on up to the LCD screen. It's far from harmful to the system, but it can be harmful to your visibility, since there's really no way of getting at it short of disassembling the system. Nintendo sells replacement screen covers at its <http://store.nintendo.com> website for around four bucks. Since you have to pry off the old screen to put the new one on, you can use this opportunity to blow the dust off the LCD screen when the cover is removed... but make sure you use something like "Canister Air" that can be bought for cheap at any computer store.



PC :: BAD PARENTS REALLY GOOD

This generation of mine may seem a little strange to you, but you see my parents... are a little strange. I'm 15 years of age and I cannot, and I emphasize cannot, buy Mature content videogames. Or buy movies rated R, or rent either. You see they are very strict. Sure I can download games like Quake 4 or Final Doom, but I sure as hell cannot buy games like Unreal Tournament or Max Payne (cruel). What am I going to do? I've already tried finding games, successfully too, but I can hardly play them because one of them is always home. This is really starting to piss me off! Kids that are like eight years old are much more privileged than I am! My own cousin, who is 14 years old, brags about playing very frequently Soldier of Fortune! That's like close to being one of the bloodiest games ever made! Any word of the wise you might be able to give me? FFSK FFSK FFSK!!

— Chris

Steve responds: Wow. Lots of pent-up rage there, Chris. I'm not sure that I'd want you to get your hands on some of these games. You're not supposed to be able to buy M-rated games or R-rated movies. I mean that's the whole point of having a ratings system, isn't it? Age ratings are a guide for parents to determine what you should and should not see.

You might feel like your parents are being unfair, but we have to respect them for monitoring what you're playing and setting some rules about what they think you ought to be exposed to. Sure, you don't agree with them, but they're the ones who are in charge so you have to live with it, at least

for the next three years. And don't worry, we've already contacted your cousin's parents and made up all kinds of crap about how corrupt he is and how he thinks Vanilla Ice is still cool.

Suddenly I feel like my dad. Word.

PC :: CHEATERS NEVER WIN

On the PC game Max Payne where do you go to use the developer command line? I said when you start the game, use the developer command line. Then during gameplay, press F12 to bring up the console. Once it's there, type the following commands to get their corresponding effects.

So were do you go to use the command line?

— Barbara

Steve responds: I keep telling you, I say cheat about this, but they still seem to leave it out. In order to use the developer command line you've got to do a couple of things.

First, create a shortcut to the game's executable file. You can do this by right-clicking on the desktop and selecting "new" and "shortcut." From there, just browse your hard drive for the game file. Once you've got a shortcut on the desktop just click it and select "properties." The shortcut tab should include a field called "target." This should be a long file name surrounded by quotation marks. All you have to do is include a space and then a developer before the final quote mark. That should set you up to use the rest of the cheats.



PS2 :: HAVING A BALL ONLINE

When are we going to start seeing online sports games on the next generation consoles? And I'm not talking about extreme sports stuff like Tony Hawk's Pro Skater 3.

— Kid Kallowing

Dave Z. responds: Well, the Dreamcast has had online sports gaming since last fall, but I'll go ahead and assume that by "next generation" you mean PlayStation 2, Xbox, and GameCube. Sega has already said that it plans on having its 2K3 games online next year and we can probably expect EA Sports to begin getting into online gaming as well, beginning in the summer or fall of 2002.

PS2 :: DRAGONBALL ZZZZZZZ

Why! Why haven't you guys been reporting on the new Dragonball Z game for PS2? The Dragonball Z series is my favorite anime and I'd love to play a game based on it.

— Anonymous

Dave Z. responds: Dragonball Z sucks. David Smith and Douglass Perry would also like to add, "Dragonball Z sucks."

XBOX :: PUMPED FOR XBOX

I'm 34, a teacher and coach, married, and man I am pumped about this Xbox release. I bought in on

the Sega Dreamcast and loved it, wish it didn't have to go. I feel guilty being this age and feeling like a kid waiting to go to Disneyland on November 18th. Am I alone or are there other gamers my age out there?

— Coach

Avon responds: There's no need to feel guilty or anything like that, Coach. We've got 34-year-olds and married guys and men around 40+ here... there are just a few who are giddy about the Xbox, they're just not all pulled into one person like you are. IGN Codes Master Chris Carle coaches a bantamweight non-athletic boxing team — not a very good one however because they're always carrying extra water weight from all of those big fluffy pretzels — and he's damn excited about the Xbox. Your Supreme Xbox Leader, Vincent Lopez, has taught everybody at IGN how to look innocent and naive, even in the face of total chaos, and he is actually kind of excited about the Xbox launch on November 15. So you see, Coach, it takes all kinds of folks to properly hype up a system launch and you're more than welcome to join our family of over-aged, videogame-loving, social misfits in that process. Just realize that once you do, your students and players won't respect you anymore or believe anything you say.



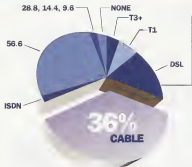
XBOX :: BUT IS IT FUN?

Has anyone noticed that a Pentium computer can have half the MHz as a Pentium system yet still have about the same power? The GameCube architecture is similar to that of a G3 Mac, meaning that it is in the 700 to 800 MHz range in Pentium terms. This is why my college buddies use Macs in their CG courses and why my high school uses Macs in the art classes. I don't have a Mac but I use them in school. I have two PCs and just meant that comparing GC to Xbox is like apples to oranges, or a '67 Corvette (455hp) to a '97 Corvette (345hp). Sure, the '67 has more horsepower, but the '97 makes the quarter mile fastest. You can have all your theoretical numbers but in the end the GC is just as powerful with better first party games. The only Xbox games I want to play (read: not own) are Halo, DOA3 and Project Gotham. Stop bashing GC, 'cuz Xbox is not better.

— Muchad

Avon responds: Wow that's a lot of jibberjabber to read through just to arrive at the point that you dig Halo, Dead or Alive 3 and Project Gotham racing. There are enthusiastic Xbox fans who don't even want to play that many games, they just want Halo. It's like your halfhearted love for three Xbox games can actually add up to more than a whole-hearted love affair with Halo. It's like comparing three apples to one giant sized Valencia orange. The apples have more seeds but the orange smells better. That's why Dan Adams' mom packs an apple in his lunch instead of an orange. So really you can come up with all of the comparison theories you like, but in the end, you actually like Xbox way more than you're willing to admit. Stop loving one console because you feel you must choose a side. ■

Since we update the IGN online sites every day with more entertainment and gaming info than you'll find in your public library's dusty old microfiche collection, it seems rather pointless to dedicate any of the pages of this mag to news that's just going to be outdated by the time you read it. So instead we decided to bring you a sampling of a few of the more informative polls (well, most of them anyway) that have appeared on the various IGN sites, as well as a smattering of timeless tidbits of gaming buzz. If you're the kind of person who likes to stay in the know, then swing by <http://www.ign.com> for your daily dose of all the latest from the world of videogames and entertainment.



What's your internet connection speed at home?

LIFE IN THE FAST LANE ::

In a recent poll on IGN.com, we asked our readers how fast they were accessing the Internet. 64.2% of you have some type of broadband connection at home, meaning you're already set to do some serious online gaming with your next-generation system. We're very sorry for the other 35.8% of you on your pitifully slow connections.

We also would like to thank the 434 people out there who are nice enough to check out IGN at school, work, or a friend's house since you have no Internet connection at home, but we also encourage you to get with the program, slackers! Oh, and those of you out there with T3 or T1 connections in your home are either lying or very, very, very spoiled!

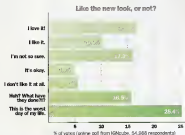
nearly
60%

of you thought Microsoft's Xbox was the most likely console candidate to rise up and destroy you

The sweet, innocent-looking GameCube came in last, because who would suspect a cute purple box of doing anything evil?

THE LEGEND OF CELDA? ::

One of the most pivotal moments in Zelda history was the revolutionary change from 2D to 3D on the Nintendo 64. Moving onto GameCube, Nintendo wants to take that a step further. Initially Nintendo demonstrated an exquisitely detailed version of *Zelda* on GameCube, which captivated the press and fans alike with its realistic look. In the middle of development Nintendo completely changed the face of the game with the help of advanced cel-shading, a technique used to give 3D worlds a cartoon appearance. The change left media and *Zelda* devotees torn, some despising the new look while others loved it. Currently, *Legend of Zelda* for GameCube is making excellent progress and series creator Shigeru Miyamoto promises it will see a late 2002 release.



12 TOP 10 GAMES OF ALL TIME FOR PLAYSTATION, PS ONE

Whether you're just now picking up a PlayStation for the first time or are looking for 32-bit PlayStation games to play on your backwardly compatible PlayStation 2, these are the best PSX games you'll find as decided upon by the editors of IGNPSX & IGNPS2.

1. *Metal Gear Solid* (Konami / Adventure)
2. *Castlevania: Symphony of the Night* (Konami / Adventure)
3. *Gran Turismo 2* (SCEA / Racing)
4. *Chrono Cross* (Square EA / RPG)
5. *Tony Hawk's Pro Skater 3* (Activision / Sports)
6. *Resident Evil 2* (Capcom / Adventure)
7. *Vagrant Story* (Square EA / RPG)
8. *Final Fantasy IX* (Square EA / RPG)
9. *Apoc Escape* (SCEA / Platform)
10. *Street Fighter Alpha 3* (Capcom / Fighting)



Legend of Zelda (NES) July 1987



The Adventure of Link (NES) December 1988



A Link to the Past (SNES) November 1991



Ocarina of Time (N64) November 1998



Majora's Mask (N64) October 2000



Legend of Zelda (GameCube Demo) Aug. 2000



Legend of Zelda (GameCube) Aug. 2001



The Future?



JAPANBOX 17

UPGRADE THIS!!

How often do you totally replace your PC?

I prefer to upgrade over time rather than replace the whole machine.



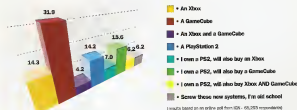
SHADES OF CURE ::

What color GameCade do you want to buy?
In a poll we conducted when Nintendo first announced its color lineup, our readers made it clear that silver is the most sought-after color.

SOFTWARE SUPPORT ::

November is usually the best month for gamers as most game companies try to release their biggest games to benefit from the holiday buying rush. We have counted the total number of projected titles for the six months starting October 2001 and created this graph to let you compare software support across all the gaming platforms that still matter. Note that some games are likely to be delayed, while some unannounced titles may still be scheduled for release during these months.

CONSOLE ENVY :=



Been waiting months for that special game, but don't know when it's going to be released? Well we've compiled this handy-dandy release list for every platform to no videogame (or DVD for that matter) could possibly escape you this holiday season! These release dates were as accurate as possible at the time of print, but since game release dates change on an almost daily basis, be sure to call your local software retailer or stop by <http://www.ign.com> for the latest release lists.



== XBOX LAUNCH NOVEMBER 15

All of it comes to an end on Thursday, November 15. All of the speculation, anxiety and butterflies – both Microsoft's and the gaming public's – should come to a screeching halt once the Xbox is available in stores. With plenty of adventure, racing, and sports games on the schedule, there will be something for everybody as far as software is concerned. Don't forget about the snazzy add-ons like the DVD Playback Kit and advanced audio/video adapters for fans of widescreen video and digital audio. Microsoft may be starting from scratch as a videogame company but they're bringing plenty of favors to the party.

Here's what IGN recommends you pick up while at CompUSA (yes, it's a shameless plug, but they will be one of the biggest Xbox retailers this holiday season).

IGN Editors' Choice Bundle

Hardware

- Xbox Console w/ One Controller \$299.99
- Additional Controller \$39.99

Games

- Halo \$49.99
- Dead or Alive 3 \$49.99
- Oddworld: Munch's Oddysee \$49.99

A six pack of a caffeine-infused energy drink of your choosing \$5.00

A 2 lb. sack of Funyuns for snackin'! \$5.00

Total: \$499.95

And the best part is, since the Xbox has a hard drive, you don't need to drop \$30 on a memory card if you don't want to carry your saved games around with you.

NOVEMBER (specific date unknown)

- (PS2) Whiplash 3
- (PC) Microsoft 4: Road to Nowhere
- (PS2) Capcom vs. SNK 2
- (PS2) FIFA Soccer 2002
- (PS2) H2O Overdrive
- (PS2) Hidden Invasion
- (PS2) Mobile Suit Gundam, Zeon's Front
- (PS2) The Simpsons Road Rage

NOVEMBER 2

- (DVD) Shrek
- (GBA) Dark Arena
- (GBA) Nancy Drew Haunted Mansion

NOVEMBER 5

- (GBA) E.T. Extra Terrestrial
- (GBA) Tom & Jerry: The Magic Ring
- (PC) Etherlords
- (PC) Foulplay

NOVEMBER 6

- (DVD) A Clockwork Orange: CE Box
- (DVD) Doctor Zhivago: SE
- (DVD) Full Metal Jacket: CE Box
- (DVD) Game With The Wind: CE
- (DVD) Legally Blonde
- (DVD) Luc Besson Six Pack
- (DVD) The Simpsons: The Complete 2nd Season
- (PC) Return: Assassin's War
- (PS2) Downforce
- (PS2) NBA Live 2002
- (PS2) NFL Blitz 2002
- (PS2) Tarzan Unlimited

NOVEMBER 7

- (GBA) Spyro the Dragon: Season of Ice
- (GBA) Razor Freestyle Scooter
- (GBA) Evolution
- (GBA) Jackie Chan Adventures
- (GBA) Gradus Galaxies
- (GBA) Jimmy Neutron
- (GBA) Planet Monsters
- (GBA) Ray the Kangaroo
- (GBA) Super Bust-A-Move
- (PC) S.W.I.N.E.
- (PS2) Dark Summit

NOVEMBER 8

- (GBA) Spongebob Squarepants

NOVEMBER 10

- (GBA) No miles, Get Phat
- (PS2) Star Wars: Elite Force
- (PS2) Tsunami

NOVEMBER 12

- (GBA) Golden Sun
- (PC) Star Wars: Galactic Battlegrounds
- (XBOX) NHL Hitz 2002

NOVEMBER 13

- (DVD) America's Sweethearts
- (DVD) Tom Reader: SE
- (DVD) Quasius Jones: SE
- (DVD) Rebecca (Criterion Collection)
- (DVD) The X-Files Season Four
- (DVD) Willy Wonka: SE
- (PC) Empire Earth
- (PC) Ghost Recon
- (PC) The Sims: Hot Date
- (PC) Screamer 4x4
- (PC) Star Trek Armada 2
- (PC) Europa Universalis 2
- (PC) Return to Castle Wolfenstein
- (PS2) Adventure Pals: Forgotten Island
- (PS2) Summit
- (PS2) Deus Ex: The Conspiracy
- (PS2) James Bond 007: Agent Under Fire
- (PS2) Jeremy McGrath's Supercross World
- (PS2) Metal Gear Solid 2: Sons of Liberty

PS2: NCAA Football 2002

- (PS2) NFL 2K2
- (PS2) NFL GameDay 2002
- (PS2) Shaun Palmer's Pro Snowboarder
- (PS2) SSX Tricky
- (PS2) Vampire Night
- (XBOX) Arctic Thunder
- (XBOX) Dave Mirra Freestyle BMX 2

NOVEMBER 14

- (GBA) Max Hoffman Pro BMX
- (GBA) Casper

NOVEMBER 15 (Xbox Launch Day)

- (GBA) Shaun Palmer Pro Snowboarding
- (GBA) Harry Potter
- (GBA) Road to Wrestlemania
- (GBA) Hot Wheels Burnin' Rubber
- (GBA) MotoGP
- (PS2) Baldur's Gate Dark Alliance
- (PS2) Dynasty Warriors 3
- (PS2) ESPN NBA 2Night
- (XBOX) Project Gotham Racing
- (XBOX) Madden NFL 2002
- (XBOX) The Simpsons Road Rage
- (XBOX) Jet Damage
- (XBOX) Air Force Delta Storm
- (XBOX) TransWorld Surf
- (XBOX) Halo
- (XBOX) NASCAR Thunder 2002
- (XBOX) NFL Fever 2002
- (XBOX) Dead or Alive 3
- (XBOX) Funin Frinity
- (XBOX) Star Wars Starfighter: Spec of Epsilon
- (XBOX) Amped
- (XBOX) Dark Summit
- (XBOX) New Legends
- (XBOX) Oddworld: Munch's Oddysee
- (XBOX) Road Dash
- (XBOX) 4x4 Evo 2
- (XBOX) Tony Hawk 2x
- (XBOX) Shrek
- (XBOX) NASCAR Heat 2002
- (XBOX) NASCAR Thunder 2002
- (XBOX) Test Drive: OffRoad – Wide Open

NOVEMBER 18

- (PC) Empire Earth
- (PC) Baseball 2002
- (PC) Wheelin' & Dealin'
- (PC) Army Men: Sarge's Heroes

NOVEMBER 17

- (GBA) Muppet Pinball Mayhem

NOVEMBER 18 (GameCube Launch Day)

- (GCN) Luigi's Mansion
- (GCN) Super Monkey Ball
- (GCN) Star Wars Rogue Leader: Rogue Squadron II
- (GCN) Wave Race: Blue Storm
- (GCN) NHL Hitz 2002
- (GCN) Madden NFL 2002
- (GCN) Dave Mirra Freestyle BMX 2
- (GCN) Universal Studios
- (GCN) The Simpsons Road Rage
- (GCN) Crazy Taxi
- (GCN) Tony Hawk's Pro Skater 3
- (GCN) All Star Baseball 2002

NOVEMBER 19

- (GBA) Lego Racers 2
- (GBA) Wario Land 4
- (PS2) ESPN National Hockey Night 2002
- (PS2) ESPN International Winter Sports 2002
- (PS2) Frogger: The Great Quest
- (PS2) Legends of Wrestling

NOVEMBER 20

- (DVD) Xosha's Way: REDUX
- (DVD) How the Grinch Stole Christmas (3 version)
- (DVD) Dirty Harry Box

(DVD) The Best of Friends #3
(DVD) The Best of Friends #4
(DVD) The Best of Friends #1-4
(DVD) The Matrix Revealed
(DVD) Planet of the Apes 2001 SE
(DVD) Planet of the Apes Television Series
(PC) Hudson's Blood Tyre
(PC) IL-2 Sturmovik
(PC) More Power 3
(PS2) Frequency
(PS2) Player: Legend of the Black Cat

NOVEMBER 21

(GBA) Dare Mins BVM 2
(GBA) Planet of the Apes
(GBA) Midway's Greatest Arcade Hits
(GBA) Rampage Puzzle Attack

NOVEMBER 23

(GBA) Frogger's Adventure
(GBA) James Earl Ray: Island Attack
(GBA) Bass Fishing 2K2

NOVEMBER 26

(PS2) Tetris Worlds

NOVEMBER 27

(DVD) Made SE
(DVD) Poole's Tale
(DVD) Willow SE (THX)
(GCN) FIFA Soccer 2002
(PC) Earl Taro
(PS2) Eve Taro: Cyprien's Chronicles
(PS2) Police 911
(PS2) SOCOM: US Navy Seals
(XBOX) NFL 2K2

NOVEMBER 28

(GBA) Madden NFL 2002
(GBA) Crus'n Velocity

DECEMBER (specific date unknown)

(GCN) Extremes G 3
(GCN) SSX Tricky
(GCN) NFL Quarterback Club 2002
(GCN) Galcon: Islands of Mystery
(PC) Ars Futaba
(PC) Star Wars: Starfighter
(PS2) Blood Diner 2
(PS2) Commandos 2
(PS2) Eve of Extinction
(PS2) NHL FaceOff 2002
(PS2) The Weakest Link
(PS2) Wave Rally
(XBOX) Star Wars: Obi-Wan
(XBOX) WWF Raw is War

DECEMBER 3

(GCN) Pikmin
(GCN) Super Smash Bros. Melee
(PC) EverQuest: Phantoms of Urfire

DECEMBER 4

(DVD) Almost Famous SE Director's Cut
(DVD) Dirty Harry Remastered SE
(DVD) Jerry Maguire SE
(DVD) Ghosts of Mars SE
(DVD) Pearl Harbor: 60th Anniversary Edition
(GBA) Jedi Power Battles
(PC) Grandia 2
(PC) Rayman R4
(PS2) Grandia II
(PS2) Rayman Arena
(XBOX) NFL Blitz 2002
(XBOX) NBA Live 2002
(XBOX) Batman Vengeance

DECEMBER 6

(GBA) Cokking Crown

DECEMBER 7

(GBA) An American Tail
(GBA) Pinatones: Big Trouble

DECEMBER 11

(DVD) Dracula (Superbit)
(DVD) The Patriot (Superbit)
(DVD) Gettysburg (Superbit)
(DVD) Jurassic Park III SE
(DVD) Jurassic Park Trilogy
(PS2) Conflict Zone
(PS2) Jade Cocoon 2
(PS2) Jak and Daxter: The Precursor Legacy
(PS2) Johnny Mokey Mad Tris
(PS2) NBA 2K2

DECEMBER 12

(XBOX) GUNNYKRYE

(XBOX) NFL 2K2

(XBOX) Azura

DECEMBER 12

(GBA) Sonic the Hedgehog
(GBA) Army Men: Operation Annihilation
(PS2) Jimmy Neutron Boy Genius

DECEMBER 16

(GCN) Johnny Mokey Mad Tris
(GBA) SE for Kase: Basketball

DECEMBER 18

(DVD) Modern House SE
(DVD) The Princess Diaries SE
(DVD) Soapy Movie 2 SE
(DVD) Series 7
(PC) Destroyer Command
(XBOX) SDA Tricky

DECEMBER 23

(GBA) The Land Before Time

JANUARY (specific date unknown)

(GCN) NFL 2K2
(GCN) Virtua Striker 3
(PC) Warcraft III
(PS2) Final Fantasy X
(PS2) Hot Shots Golf 3
(PS2) NSA ShootOut 2002
(PS2) Salt Lake 2002
(PS2) Shifters
(PS2) Star Wars Racer Revenge: Racer II

JANUARY 2

(DVD) The Fast and the Furious SE
(PC) To a Movie: a Gun Out

JANUARY 4

(DVD) Mad Max SE

JANUARY 6

(XBOX) The Sims: Block Party

JANUARY 10

(XBOX) Need for Speed
(XBOX) NightCaster

JANUARY 14

(GBA) Duke Nukem
(GCN) NBA Courtside 2002
(PS2) The Lost

JANUARY 18

(DVD) Buffy the Vampire Slayer: The Complete First Season
(DVD) Pearl Harbor (VISTA)
(DVD) Thor: 20th Anniversary Collection
(PC) Diapers 2
(PC) Mahan
(PS2) World of Outlaws: Sprint Car
(XBOX) TransWorld Snowboarding
(XBOX) NBA 2K2

JANUARY 16

(XBOX) Rock & Rocky
(PS2) Garbage Man

JANUARY 18

(GBA) Creatives

JANUARY 20

(XBOX) NBA 2K2

JANUARY 20

(PC) The Sims: Life and Magic SE

JANUARY 21

(PC) The Sims: Life and Magic SE

Where in the world is
Matt Casamassima?



Author: He is in Los Angeles



:: GAMECUBE LAUNCH NOVEMBER 18

Nintendo's next-generation videogame console has arrived at long last. The GameCube system comes complete with one controller and a power adapter. There will be approximately 10 games ready at launch on November 18 in the US - from Luigi's Mansion to Star Wars Rogue Leader - quite a selection indeed. Which ones will you buy? Decisions, decisions...

You shouldn't have to think so hard, we realize, which is why we've whipped together a breakdown of the essentials in an Editors' Choice Bundle below. Simply follow the instructions and your brain will thank you for it later - we assure you.

IGN Editors' Choice Bundle

Hardware

- GameCube Console w/ One Controller \$199.99
- 2 Extra Controllers \$69.98
- Memory Card 59 \$14.99

Games

- Star Wars Rogue Leader, Rogue Squadron 2 \$49.99
- Madden NFL 2002 \$49.95
- Wave Racer: Blue Storm \$49.95
- Luigi's Mansion \$49.95

Total: \$484.76

Since GameCube is 100 bucks cheaper than the Xbox, you've got enough money left over for a third controller, a fourth game, and a memory card (which is required for saving your game). Plus, you still have enough cash in your pocket to take a friend to the movies.

Naughty Dog ventures into new territory on PlayStation 2 with a huge, seamless adventure that's familiar and yet unlike anything before.

JAK AND DAXTER

the
PRECURSOR LEGACY

Naughty Dog has been at work for nearly two years on its biggest project ever, an action-adventure game that borrows and improves on some of the best ideas from the classic arcade games in the 8-bit and 16-bit era. Those familiar with Naughty Dog's most successful series, Crash Bandicoot, will recognize reminiscent bits of Crash in Jak andaxter, but within minutes of playing the game, they'll also realize that it's truly leaps and bounds beyond the team's former work.

Jak andaxter invites players to begin an adventure with two entirely original characters: Jak, a quiet, youthful humanoid (he's got long arms and elfish ears), and his smart-aleck friend and sidekick,axter, around whom the game's troubles first develop. The story begins withaxter who, while playing around a pool of Dark Eco, falls in. When he emerges, he's transformed into a little creature that resembles something between a ferret and a weasel.

Unable to transform back to his "regular" self, the duo seeks the help of Samos, the Green Sage. He sends them on a long journey through dozens of lush and organic areas to visit another knowledgeable Sage "far, far, to the north." On their journey they encounter dozens of villains, uncover an insidious plot, and slowly grow from unsure youths to knowledgeable, skilled heroes.



A common reaction is to compare Jak and Daxter to Nintendo's Banjo-Kazooie. While many people might connect these two pairs of characters, again, they're much different. Jak and Daxter function entirely different from Nintendo's duo. Gamers take control of Jak – and only Jak – while Daxter is a non-player character. Daxter's feature role in the game lies in his humor and wit. He constantly pipes in with obnoxious, wisecracking asides and is always there to volunteer Jak's services, but not necessarily his own. As you later learn, Daxter is a big talker, but he's a wimp, wussing out whenever possible.



Players have a wide variety of abilities with Jak. He's incredibly nimble and his response is remarkably tight and quick. What's more – he just feels right. What complements Jak's excellent control is the brilliantly smooth animation, which is so fluid it appears as if it were taken right out of a Disney film. Jak is versatile and can walk or run great distances. He's capable of altering his environment, too.

All the while this is happening, Daxter performs various humorous animations. For instance, when Jak swims, Daxter clings desperately to his head, and when he spins, Daxter grabs onto Jak's hair. The pair boasts a series of victory dances and poses after collecting a power cell, and after "dying," Daxter always has something "clever" to say. There's also an acrobatic standing animation definitely worth seeing.

The most interesting aspect of Jak and Daxter? It borrows heavily from great games of the past, such as Donkey Kong Country, Mario, and Zelda (and you'll also notice a little Crash Bandicoot, too), but manages to elicit an entirely different experience than any of those games. Jak and Daxter is an incredibly even blend of action, platform, and adventure.

(Continued on page 18)

THE CAST

The PlayStation 2 may have lost a lot of character when previously PlayStation-exclusive franchises like Spyro and Crash went multi-platform, but Sony might have something better in store with Jak and Daxter. The characters in the game are arguably more endearing and likeable than any that we've ever introduced to in the PlayStation's signature platformers.

Thanks to the excellent character animation and top-notch voice acting, the game has the feel of a really good Saturday morning cartoon or even a Disney animated feature film.

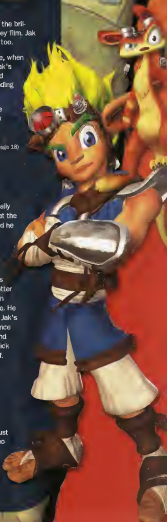
And it all starts with the game's two main characters – Jak and Daxter.

Jak is an elfin young boy who is essentially the game's hero. He's the character that the player controls throughout the game and he rarely says a word. Jak is also Daxter's best friend and the reason he goes on this adventure is to help out his buddy.

Daxter is Jak's humanoid friend who gets turned into this creature that looks like a cross between a weasel and an otter (dubbed an oxei by Naughty Dog's Jason Rubin) after falling into a pit of Dark Eco. He spends most of the game hanging onto Jak's shoulder and will make up for Jak's silence by chiming in with lots of wisecracks and one-liners. Daxter is the essential sidekick and never fails to provide comedic relief.

ABILITIES

Jak can perform about 14 different kinds of useful motions. Jak can walk, run, and jump just like any good platform character. He also can perform a double jump, a double jump combo spin, a vertical jump attack, an uppersault, a lunge punch, and a Crash-inspired spin attack. He's also capable of rolling, crawling, hanging on ledges, swimming, and diving. Lastly, Jak performs acrobatic moves, including swinging from bars.





For instance, you can use a Flut Flut (see "Going Mobile" section below) to carefully hop across platforms. For example, at one point in the game Jak enlists the creature's help to bridge a huge set of canyons, using careful timing of his jumps on the moving, circling platforms. Naughty Dog's game also owes a lot to Mario with its sharp, quick character control and inspired mini-games. And from *Legend of Zelda* the game borrows large environments, physical puzzles, and multiple objectives, some of which might require returning to an already-visited area. But again, don't be fooled into thinking the whole experience is derivative. Naughty Dog, like Shakespeare, borrows smartly from its predecessors, reshaping and re-making elements to fit its world.

Jak and Daxter is a rich, compelling experience. With its huge, organic never-has-to-be-loaded-more-than-once landscapes, players should find Jak and Daxter fun, deep, and incredibly rewarding.

Lurkers ▶

These guys are the big purple-ish creatures that are stirring up all sorts of trouble throughout Jak and Daxter's world. Many of the game's tasks will center on trying to stop certain Lurkers from mining Dark Eco for use in their evil plans.

◀ Samos

Samos is one of the four Sages in Jak and Daxter's world. More specifically, he is the Green Sage and his main purpose in the game seems to be to help lead Jak and Daxter through their quest. He's knowledgeable about all Eco, but his specialty is the green kind.



GOING MOBILE

While Jak does have a bevy of moves in his arsenal to help him get around, there will be times in his adventure where he must depend on other means and modes of transportation. Here's a sample of the three main ways that Jak can get mobile without having to use his own two feet:

Aero-Groo Zoomer

Also referred to as the A-Groo Zoomer or just simply the Zoomer, this vehicle works like a hovercraft and allows Jak and Daxter to get around on surfaces that they can't just walk on—such as molten lava or water. It feels a lot like the jet ski in *Crash Bandicoot: Warped* and sounds like a souped-up lawnmower.

Flut-Flut

This is a bird-like creature that Jak can ride. It looks similar to the Chocobos in Square's *Final Fantasy* series. It doesn't fly, but can jump much higher and further than Jak, so it's used in places where there are areas that must be reached that he can't get to by normal means. Beyond just jumping, the Flut Flut can glide and attack with its beak.

Warp Gates

The quickest way to get around Jak and Daxter's world is to use the Warp Gates. There are five total gates: They're located at Geyser Rock and in or near the huts of the four Sages. The problem here is that you can only use the Warp Gates if they're on, and it's up to Jak and Daxter to activate them.

In addition to the Zoomer, Flut-Flut, and Warp Gates, Jak and Daxter will also be able to travel from one area to another through the use of transportation devices like a boat, a snow lift, and a large elevator. However, these are completely area-specific and the travel is shown through an automatic in-game cutscene.



SUPPORT CAST

Of course, you can't really have a completely enjoyable story if only the main characters are appealing. Having a strong supporting cast is important for feature films and it's also true for story-based games. And in *Jak and Daxter*, we're presented with a very impressive group of supporting characters that are often even more appealing than the heroes.

Keira ▶

Keira is the daughter of Samos and is a very precocious young lady. She knows a great deal about the world they live in and is a master mechanic. She's also very cute and appears to have some sort of a crush on the game's hero, Jak.

Gol

Gol is a Sage who knows everything about the Dark Eco. Samos suggests to Jak and Daxter that they search for Gol because if anyone in the world knows how to change Daxter back into his original form, it would be him.

AREAS

For a PlayStation 2 game, *Jak and Daxter* offers something that was once quite unique: a geographical world in which anything you can see, you can go to. For years now, Naughty Dog's Jason Rubin has yearned to create an entirely fluid and unbroken gaming experience—with out load times and other annoying interruptions. Just like on the archaic cartridges from the classic Nintendo years, *Jak and Daxter* loads once to get into the world, and then never loads again. Because of PS2's power and Naughty Dog's programming expertise, it can finally be done.

Organized into locales, rather than levels, *Jak and Daxter* features tons of little villages, fortresses, and cities, passageways and canyons, some of which are full-fledged destinations, while others offer brief challenges or mini-games. Fire Canyon is one such area, a narrow passage requiring the A-Grav Zoomer to cross it. Players encounter 16 areas altogether, each with its own set of characters, goals, and visual distinctions. On the next page you will find a few distinct locales to illustrate the point.

(continued on page 30)



ECO

What is Eco?

Eco is a powerful magical substance that can be found and collected throughout each world. It comes in a variety of colors and sizes, and depending on which color is collected, it will affect you or the environment around you in special ways. It is a bit of a mysterious substance, not necessarily "good" or "bad."

Green Eco helps recover energy.

Collecting 50 units of the small Eco provides one recover point, while collecting one large Eco will give you one recover point. Standing in a green eco vent will bring you back to 100% health. Green Eco vents will also allow you to heal (see dark plants in Precursor Basin).

Blue Eco is a very powerful, magical substance that resembles pure electrical energy. It has an effect on the environment around you as well as the ability to expand your abilities. Use Blue Eco to open the closed vents that can be seen throughout each world. It will make Jak faster and allow him to collect items that he comes close to. It also manipulates broken Precursor artifacts and open doorways.

Yellow Eco, while hard to find, gives Jak new abilities and powers. With it, Jak can shoot fireballs.

Red Eco is found in various places throughout the game. It makes Jak more powerful, allowing him to kill stronger enemies in a fewer number of hits.

Dark Eco: Mysterious and dangerous, the powers of the Dark Eco are known best by only one Sage, who lives far, far to the north. Touching Dark Eco depletes health, and overexposure to it can cause full transformation. For instance, Daxter used to be a humanoid just like Jak, before he fell into the Dark Eco and came out looking like a cross between a weasel and an otter (commonly known as an "Oxal").



AREAS

Misty Island

The far off island where Dexter first falls into the Dark Eco, Misty Island is a fog-filled, waterlocked isle littered with giant enemies, intriguing physical puzzles, and obstacles. The fog, of course, is there for a purpose, creating a nice atmospheric effect. Players can also get a good look at Sentinel Beach and the Sandover Village, which underscores the massiveness of the continuous world.

Lost Precursor City

After visiting Rock Village, Jak and Dexter have access to several areas, one of which is an underwater world set in connecting globes, tubes, and enclosures. Lost Precursor City is located deep beneath the ocean's surface, and getting there is half the fun. Filled with weird blue creatures and electrically charged pools, this area is strange and wonderful, and offers the mysterious feeling of being in the lost city of Atlantis.

Boggy Swamp

Knee-deep in moss and still water, Jak's experience in Boggy Swamp is um...wet and wild. Dark Eco is everywhere, frogs lunge at you with their long tongues, rats attack in great numbers, and a large quantity of Blue and Yellow Eco can be found. Players get their first chance to cast fireballs, too. The coolest thing here are the huge blue-powered jump pads that launch your duo hundreds of feet into the air, just as if you were in an airplane or a roller coaster. From that height, you can see everything in the region.

Snowy Mountain

Built in the high mountains far from Sandover Beach, the first area of the game, Snowy Mountain is a mixture of craggy ledges, small meadows, and crudely built fortresses. It's snowing all the time, and the snow and ice affect various surfaces. Light blue surfaces enable Jak to skate along them but are difficult to stop and turn on, while bridges are very slippery. Players actually see Jak waist high in snow, too.



EDITOR'S THOUGHTS

Doug Perry

Feeling: Usually, I hate collecting stuff. But Jak and Dexter engrossed me to such an extent that I forgot I was collecting anything. I was just playing.



Technical (Graphics): The vibrant textures and quirky course design are visually enhanced by beautiful, fluid character animation and organic, moving backgrounds.

David Zdylo

Feeling: Through the borrowing of elements from many different games, including its own Crash Bandicoot series, Naughty Dog has managed to craft a new experience that feels completely fresh, intriguing and highly enjoyable. I'm blown away by how much I love this game.



Technical (Control): It has that special Mario 64 feeling. Moving around a character in a 3D world has never felt this good. The quirky course designs are visually enhanced by beautiful, fluid character animation and organic, moving backgrounds.

David Smith

Feeling: The sense of space and freedom of movement is something else—you can see the entire world stretching out to the horizon, and whatever places you see, you can visit. Well, providing the giant sharks don't get in the way.



Technical (World Design): This is a very impressive feat of memory management and data streaming. Jak and Dexter manages to hold huge amounts of level data in the PS2's purportedly limited memory (m'ha ha), and new areas appear without a single blip.



nintendo gamecube becomes the
official home of the resident evil franchise.
see the difference evolution makes.

Capcom shocked the gaming world last September when it announced that it would make its popular Resident Evil (Biohazard in Japan) franchise exclusive to GameCube. Company executives stated that the first "survival horror" title to grace Nintendo's next-generation console (on March 22, 2002) would be a remake of the original Resident Evil, and the firm released first media of it in action to amazed gamers and industry watchers. Capcom noted other series sequels and exclusives would follow, in order: Resident Evil, Resident Evil O, Resident Evil 2, Nemesis and Code Veronica, and finally Resident Evil 4. In this article, we've broken down what GameCube owners can expect from each title.

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resident evil

Release Date in Japan: March 22, 2002

Series creator Shinji Mikami has returned after more than five years away from *Resident Evil* to take helm of this ambitious GameCube remake. The title once again features S.T.A.R.S. team members Chris Redfield and Jill Valentine as playable characters on a quest to make it through a dark, zombie-filled mansion alive. However, story elements have been altered slightly, control tweaked and the technology upped considerably so that environments and the ghasts that frequent them look much more realistic than ever before. The action is still pre-rendered, according to Capcom, but now the backgrounds are also animated. Early screenshots of the game show ultra-detailed zombies, unbelievably crisp texture work, and hallways that project real-time shadows from lightning outside. Any way you slice it, though, *Resident Evil* is already shaping up to be one of the most beautiful games for Nintendo's next-generation console.

resident evil 2

Resident Evil 2 was released for PlayStation three years ago and is still considered the best entry into the franchise by many. The game details the exploits of Claire Redfield (sister to Chris of the first game) and rookie cop Leon Kennedy in the corrupted Raccoon City. Unlike the first "survival horror" offering, the setting won't be limited to a monster-filled mansion, but rather open to the entirety of Raccoon City, including back alleys and even a dark, seemingly abandoned police station. Similarly, the zombies themselves are more varied, from standard undead to police ghasts and even genetic mutations such as giant alligators. The GameCube version of the title is expected to be a marginally enhanced port, but it will not feature the graphic overhaul that the original is getting, according to franchise creator Shinji Mikami. Look for this one late 2002.



The screenshot featured was taken from the PlayStation version of the game.

resident evil 0

This *Resident Evil* "prequel" began its existence as an N64 action-adventure and was moved to GameCube last year. The story follows *Resident Evil* side-character Rebecca Chambers and a mysterious character named "Billy" as they fight the undead aboard a moving train. The interesting twist is that unlike any other game of the franchise, players will simultaneously be able to control both characters, using the strengths of each one in specific situations. *Resident Evil 0* promises to reveal the beginnings of the zombies and how they came to infest the town of Raccoon City. "It will probably have a 'taste' close to [*Resident Evil 1*]," said Capcom director Yoshiki Okamoto. "It won't be a degeneration though, but a new idea on top of it." While *Resident Evil 0* was originally scheduled to be the first of the series to hit Nintendo's next-generation console, it will follow Mikami's remake. Reports out of Japan indicate that development on RE0 was scrapped and reworked completely after the design team saw the outstanding look of *Resident Evil* for GameCube. It's highly possible that a similar style will befall the prequel upon its release in mid-2002.



A screenshot from the N64 version of *Resident Evil 0*.

resident evil 3: nemesis

Though it's called *Resident Evil '3'*, the storyline for this zombie-filled adventure actually takes place between the original and *Resident Evil 2*. The title once again highlights the struggles of original heroine Jill Valentine, still determined to uncover the mystery of Raccoon City and the corrupt Umbrella corporation behind the madness. Jill is accompanied this time around by a renegade named Carlos Oliveira, who is also a playable character. What separates *Nemesis* from its predecessors is that in addition to regular old zombie battle players must also deal with a super-intelligent genetic mutation—a beast called *Nemesis*. The graphics looked great in dusty PlayStation form, and the GCN version is almost certainly to feature new filtering and polish for a mildly improved appearance. It is, however, like *Resident Evil 2*, a direct port so don't expect any significant changes gameplay wise. Capcom has not set a release date for *Nemesis* GameCube yet, but it's likely to arrive at the end of 2002 or early 2003.



A screenshot from the PlayStation version of the game.



resident evil code: veronica x

Released originally as a Dreamcast title, Code Veronica is different from all preceding Resident Evil games in that it runs in real-time polygonal 3D without pre-rendered backdrops. This allows for a dynamic camera system, among other additions, that sweeps and pans around environments for extra mood. The title takes place immediately after Nemesis and features Resident Evil 2 star Claire Redfield on a quest to find her long-lost brother. The search leads her to a seemingly uninhabited island, except it's filled with genetically enhanced zombies and an Umbrella plot. The game was released for PlayStation 2 in 2001 as Code Veronica X, a port with small enhancements including extended CGI cut-scenes not featured in the previous game. The GameCube version is a take on Code Veronica X with improved graphics and sound, but will remain otherwise unchanged.

resident evil 4

One of the most sought after sequels ever, Resident Evil 4 is a brand new entry into the spooky franchise and it will debut exclusively on GameCube. Next to nothing is known about the title so far, but it is understood that franchise creator Shinji Mikami is very much involved with its development, and that it will almost certainly push GameCube's technological power to the limits for an eerie realistic look unrivaled by anything that's come before. Word from Japan indicates that, like Code Veronica before it, Resident Evil 4 will run in real-time 3D without worry of pre-rendered backgrounds. No release date has been set for the anticipated follow-up, but gamers shouldn't expect it until late 2002 or perhaps even 2003 at the earliest.

It's clear that Resident Evil fans have a lot to look forward to and that GameCube is the place to do it. Check out <http://cube.ign.com> for more news, screenshots and even movies of the Resident Evil games coming soon to a GameCube near you.

OVER!



It's easy how soon we forget that this was the same company that clumsily handed over B.O.B., the inane personal computing pal, to an unimpressed public. Microsoft may have the products that you want, but they were never the products you talked about. You may type out your proposals and term papers on Word, but any romantic interests between you and the streamlined text editor were kept behind firmly closed doors. Not only was Microsoft unhip, at times they were reviled. They were the enemy, plain and simple.

Back in January of 2000, when the initial rumors of Microsoft's secret game console reached the press, gamers didn't know what to think. Never mind the fact that an American company was once again attempting to steal thunder from the Japanese juggernauts, what about



cool is a four letter word... **XBOX** - so is Microsoft as a gaming company? It's been a long road.

Next-Generation magazine breaks story that Microsoft may be working on a console system entitled the "X-Box" :September 3, 1999

Bill Gates announces "X-Box" system at Game Developer's Conference :March 9, 2000
in San Jose, California

Name X-Box changes to Xbox :March 10, 2000

Dead or Alive 2 (to become Dead or Alive 3) rumored to come to Xbox. Oddworld Inhabitants mention interest in moving Munch's Oddysee over to new system :March 11, 2000

Bungie, developer of Halo, is bought out by Microsoft and moved to Seattle :June 16, 2000

The first batch of Software Development Kits (SDKs) reach developers :June 17, 2000

Microsoft announces 155 developers working on Xbox projects :September 19, 2000

The final four games in the Oddworld series announced to be Xbox exclusive :October 23, 2000

Microsoft announces European delay for the Xbox to better prepare for US and Japan launches :December 22, 2000

Sega goes third party and ties with Microsoft for specific games are announced :February 2, 2001

Microsoft announces Japanese Xbox controller and Dead or Alive 3 at Tokyo Game Show :March 29, 2001

Microsoft announces Japanese Xbox launch delayed until February 22, 2002 :August 24, 2001

American launch pushed back from September 20, 2001 to November 8th to November 15th

the fact that it was going to come from a company that thought a talking paper clip was a soothing solution to the blue screen of death? It was unthinkable. It was laughable. Still, the rumors persisted over the next few months, until finally it was announced that Bill Gates himself would speak at the Game Developer's Conference in San Jose, California that March.

The conference is normally a small, casual affair, and the press immediately smelled an announcement coming on the heels of his arrival. They were right. Bill Gates finally unveiled what was to be known then as the dash-endowed "X-Box," at that time literally a giant chrome X with a green globe in the center, and a single cord coming from the back connecting to a Sidewinder controller. The technology demonstration, everything from a swarm of butterflies forming an X in the air to a huge room full of bouncing ping pong balls carousing off of mouse traps, impressed casual viewers and tech-heads alike, but didn't prove that games were on the way. The public was left to cradle a small list of high-profile developers like EA and Konami that had pledged initial support. It was enough to convince American gamers that maybe Microsoft could pull it off, especially if deals were already being made with some of Japan's largest game publishers, but it certainly didn't feel real.

Then, the silence. The horrible, painful silence. We all waited for word, for the bomb to drop, but there was nothing else to say, at least in Microsoft's eyes. The announcement had been made, and it was up to the press to bite our nails until E3 2000, when we expected the doors to blast open on the system. Year and a half to go or not, we wanted our games, and we wanted them now. What we got, however, were neat sound demos, a real-time representation of the raven and robot demo at first shown at GDC, and some happy speak from Microsoft about how your world would "really, truly, we're not kidding this time" change once you finally saw some of the games in the works. Not that they were going to show them at that point, mind you. At least the giant X on the Microsoft show floor drew in the kids excited to see the tech demos of the Xbox in action. There were a few rumors out of the show however, one from Tecmo that pointed to *Dead or Alive 2* as a special edition for Xbox, and another that had Oddworld inhabitants more than a little annoyed at the PS2 in terms of development, and with an open ear towards a certain green box.

The Shopping Spree

E3 was not the time to drop the bomb it seemed -- that would be over a month later, when the first major acquisition was delivered on a platter to the public. Microsoft had purchased Bungie, outright. Just like that. The team was moving to Seattle, and while Halo hadn't been announced as an Xbox exclusive at that time, it was certainly implied from Bungie's interest in working on the Xbox architecture. Microsoft had been promoting its system as a system built by and for developers, and bringing in a developer with one of the highest profile games in years certainly helped prove that the company was putting its money where its marketing was. It was smooth, and genius -- if you can't beat them, buy them. Sony had done the same with Naughty Dog, and Microsoft was following suit.

It was right about this time that the "Xbox as a console PC" debate once again heated up, due to the summer tid where a PC developer would shout "hey, our PC game is, uh... definitely coming to the Xbox as well!" at random moments. It's hard to make your console sound legitimate and perfectly pointed when you've got developers from all over the world unofficially announcing PC-type titles from their backlogs for the Xbox. Nothing had been approved, but it sounded good, anyway. Many of these games have never surfaced since, though a few PC-type games, *Morrowind* being the most impressive, look to make the successful leap from the PC to the Xbox in the next six months.

The summer also marked the first time that the console world went completely wacko. *Crash Bandicoot* on Xbox? *Metal Gear Solid X*? Of course, what was unheard of a year ago is now commonplace, as nearly every major franchise has either gone console-global, or has shifted consoles altogether. After a hot summer of console leaping, the beginning of the school season also marked Microsoft's announcement of 155 developers, all in support of the system. Most of the companies were unknowns, but some of the home run hitters were there, except for a mysteriously absent EA. Don't

January 5, 2001: Bill Gates shows the final Xbox console system and controller at a CES keynote address

March 13, 2001: Microsoft shows off its first party selection at its yearly Gamesstock press event

May 13, 2001: Microsoft shows off third and first party titles at E3 2001

worry, laughed J. Allard, Xbox bigwig. They just wanted to save that for their own announcement. Big sighs as Xbox fans cradle their PlayStation copies of Madden with a tear of relief. A month later, and another bombshell – Munch's Oddyssey, the high profile game from Oddworld Inhabitants, was going to be Xbox exclusive. After months of silence, there were finally some reasons to stand beside the newest system on the block.

Hardware and the Rock

This is where things begin to get a little finicky. GameCube had been announced, and the Xbox was (morely (and silently) working behind the curtain while PS2 took the spotlight. What started as a disaster became the largest console launch in history, and Sony took back the throne that it had confidently sent to get polished for its return. A few huge titles, some general franchise announcements, and an invisible console system did not a PS2 killer make. With 2001, Microsoft finally decided it was time to start the competition, and began with the biggest of all the brutes. At the 2001 Consumer Electronics Show, the Rock himself announced *WWF Raw is War* for the Xbox, and helped unveil the look of the controller to the public to a crowd that couldn't decide what to do: over – their mighty hero, or their new obsession.

on monitors, but nowhere was *DoA 3* to be seen on the show floor.

As quickly as E3 ended, Microsoft realized its mistakes, and once again rolled with the punches. *Dead or Alive 3* was finally debuted to the gasps of all press involved – finally, proof that it existed, and that it really did look that good. Games are now being displayed in force by Microsoft, and the recent shipment of debugs to the press has brought with it the third party titles from major publishers. Only a few months after the E3 showing, and public opinion of the Xbox has taken a sharp, positive turn thanks to the fact that they've been showing off the titles that had the public intrigued in the first place. The most recent *Halo* visit in our offices had two die-hard Nintendo fans pre-ordering their Xbox bundles the very next day, and games in general are looking more than great – they're looking legendary.

It's still anyone's guess as to whether all this hard work means that Microsoft will still take a back seat to Nintendo and Sony's established kingdoms, but it's certainly looking more like an equal fight, especially considering the smirks amongst the gaming elite that were seen during the first few months of the announcement. The company's in the accelerated class, picking up from watching the moves of the

The future for the Xbox comes in infallible packages, like this mobile promotional unit ▼



Microsoft will continue with their "hands on" approach to promotion by using items like this mobile promotional unit that allow gamers to get their hands on the products in a cool atmosphere. ▲

<http://ps2.ign.com/news/38833.html>

From that point on it was as if the train had suddenly left the station, with new announcements trickling out every month, slowly building momentum. Sega goes third party (new games for the Xbox), Matrix games announced (exclusive lead time for Xbox version), and most importantly, *Dead or Alive 3* (more kicking for everyone). It was slick, it was beautiful, and the entire sexy thing was exclusive to the Xbox. The first Japanese coup had begun, and once again detractors began to quiet as people began to wonder "are they actually pulling this off? Is this really going to happen?" Somehow girls in leather kicking each other out of build-ings finally made it all seem so ... real.

Still, there were the skeptics. E3, said the followers, just wait for E3. Finally *Halo*, *Munch*, *NFL Fever*, and possibly even a glimpse at *Dead or Alive 3* were seen, to give those other fanboys something to chew on. If Xbox supporters didn't walk in with a swagger, they at least held their heads high. Unfortunately, one look at the selection of somewhat choppy, limited games on display impressed no one. While screens and text in print and on the web had been promoting the Xbox prowess, it was hard to tell from playing a pretty but somewhat stiff *Halo*, or checking out a slow-paced, all-too-subtle level of *Munch*. Other games suffered from framerate problems – not as bad as Sony's dismal showing in 2000, but without the past history to pad the fall. The base games were there, the moments of brilliance were visible, but the overall package was hard to cheer for when Luigi and pals were exhibiting picture-perfect performances in nearby booths. Worst of all, the guaranteed showstopper was a complete no-show. Terms displayed Hitom and her tail-kicking friends

other giants, learning from the stumbles of Sega, analyzing Nintendo's market, and enviously gazing at Sony's ultimate cool. Microsoft has made some mistakes, but they've always laughed at their mistakes, and quickly learned and corrected from them. Most importantly, they've got games. Lots and lots of fantastic games, for launch and beyond. They've learned one successful skill, something they've kept to over the last few months, and the key to what will make them the coolest, and perhaps most successful gaming company of the future.

Shut up and let the games do the talking.

– Vincent Lopez



PC FEATURE

CHEAP-ASS GAMES for cheap-ass gamers

IT WON'T TAKE 50 DOLLARS TO MAKE YOU HOLLER

While it may seem like a distasteful idea to some gamers out there, taking a heading dive into the often-shunned bargain bin can actually prove to be quite a fruitful endeavor—especially if those doing the diving either have limited amounts of money or have craptastic computers that seem only slightly faster than a watch calculator. But just because you don't have a lot of money to put into your PC or your PC games, that doesn't mean you can't get some banging games for a cheap price. There are plenty of games out there that carry a low price—and maybe even lower system requirements—that will still bring you plenty of gaming love and experience.

One of the biggest challenges is finding the really good deals out there. Well, we've solved that problem for you by giving you our hot picks for under \$20. Every game in this article is a certified winner, guaranteed to please you or that special someone that you're shopping for this holiday season without burning a hole in your pocket.

One thing you should remember when shopping for these titles is, even though they're bargain games, they might not always be in the bargain bin. Those games sequestered to that sad little pile are usually the budget titles that were always and will always be budget titles. While some of these may be half-price doovers, they were never intended for gaming greatness. You may want to give the bin a once over (although you should avoid anything with the words "Extreme" or "Army Men" in the title), but you should spend most of your time taking a look through the regular shelves of PC games that you'll find at various stores like CompUSA. This is where most of the quality titles will stay, even when they drop in price. It should also be noted that the prices quoted in this article are subject to change, but if you look around, you should be able to find all of these games for under \$20.

We'll start with one of the most popular genres in PC gaming, since the release of *Wolfenstein 3D* way back in 1992—the first-person shooter. The one thing about titles in this genre in particular is that you should really check the specs before you buy. You may not have the power to run some of them even though they're in your price range. You can break these games



from top: *Duke 3D*: Arnie is still one of the best multi-layer shooters ever made. *Theif 2* requires a lot more thought and stealth than most shooters. *Over the Hedge* is the classic COME. *Colossal Cave* is a classic in plenty of being for your taste.



down into a couple of types: the twitch shooter and the thinking man shooters. *Serious Sam* (\$19.99) and *Quake III* (\$19.99) are perfect examples of twitch shooters, and both are incredibly fun games with some of the best graphics around. They both offer non-stop action, but *Quake III* is mainly a multiplayer game, so stick to *Serious Sam* if you're looking for a fulfilling single player experience as well, or at least a single player experience where monsters fly at you constantly giving you little time to think, let alone react.

The thinking gamer's shooter is a whole different ball of wax. Games that actually require planning and stealth often don't appeal to the twitch crowd, but they are some of the most creative games around. *Deus Ex* (\$19.99), our pick for PC Game of 2000, is one of the most complete shooters to date with an incredible story, bits of fast action, and the option to play the game virtually any way you want, whether that be stealthily slinker or viciously straight-forward. If you're looking for a serious sneak shooter, jump into the middle ages and into the shoes of nefarious, heroic anti-hero with *Thief II* (\$14.99). This still stands as one was one of the best and most atmospheric FPSs ever, but be forewarned, you'll definitely have to use that dusty thing in your skull to beat this one.

Strategy titles are next on the list. These come in a variety of sub-genres. The first and most popular are the real time strategy (RTS) titles, which challenge gamers to develop tactics and manage units quickly. *Shogun: Total War* (\$19.99) was one of the most impressive strategy titles to be released in 2000, and an incredible addition for all of us here in the office. If you've ever wanted to control

hundreds of units in an organized campaign to take control of Japan, this is your opportunity for greatness. If you're looking for a great value, *WarCraft II: Battle.net Edition* (\$11.99) is something that you can really sink your sharp orc teeth into. The set includes both *WarCraft II: Tides of Darkness* and the expansion, *WarCraft II: Beyond the Dark Portal*.

Economic strategy games are for those that are less than warlike. Luckily there are some absolutely fantastic games out there that are a lot of fun as well as incredibly deep. Both *Pharaoh* (\$19.99) and *Zeus: Master of Olympus* (\$19.99) from Impressions are fantastic city building and economic games with very small emphasis on combat and are especially fun for those with a thing for classical history. *Roller Coaster Tycoon* (\$19.99) is another great choice. It's been on the best seller list since its release in 1999, and it's still a favorite around here. There's just something about building a theme park and the coasters inside of it that appeals to the kid in all of us. Don't be fooled though, this is a deep game with a lot of options. *Railroad Tycoon II Platinum* (\$19.99) is the latest incarnation of one of the best economic strategy games ever created. Those aspiring railroad barons now have somewhere to test their skills.

Role-playing games have been and always will be something that will appeal to gamers. They allow the



“One of the biggest challenges is finding the really good deals out there.”

embodiment from fear: *Fallout* is definitely an RPG for those of you in need of radiation therapy. *Shogun's* vast landscapes and enormous armies make you feel like you're commanding real forces in feudal Japan. *Warcraft* may not look as pretty as modern RTS games, but it's still one of the best. Like *Thief*, *Deus Ex* is a thinkingman's shooter. Recreate ancient Egypt with Impressions' *Pharaoh*

clockwise from left: If Egypt's not your thing, Impressions' Zeus will let you rebuild ancient Greece. Fly high in the skies over Korea in *MIG Alley*. Roller Coaster Tycoon lets you build your own theme park without having to worry about cleaning up the vomit. *Rainbow Tycoon* is a perfect choice for any aspiring business barons out there. If you've ever wanted to travel to a different dimension, then *Planescape*. Torment may be the RPG for you. Strap yourself to a 1250ccrotch rocket for under \$20 with *Superbike 2001*.

"Economic strategy games are for those that are less than warlike, but still competitive."



perfect chance to adopt a different persona and live out fantasies that would otherwise be unattainable. If you're looking for a little post-apocalyptic action, look no further than Interplay's *Fallout/Fallout 2 Dual Jewel* (\$9.99), two of our all-time favorite RPGs in one box. Also from Interplay comes a fantasy RPG that takes place on different planes of existence inhabited by demons and the dead.

Planescape: Torment (\$9.99) is still one of the best RPGs ever released, and will most likely retain that recognition for a long, long time.

If you're looking for a game that gets you behind the controls of a machine, we've got a variety for you as well. *Airfix Dogfighter* (\$9.99) is a little known title that puts you at the controls of a number of remote-controlled aircraft dogfighting in the kitchen, bedroom, and basement. Even though it isn't the deepest game ever created, it's just plane fun! Get it? Plane fun?!? Okay ... anyway, if you're looking for something a little more serious, give *MIG Alley* (\$9.99) a look. It's a whole lot of combat flight sim for such a little price. Lastly, we drop from the skies onto the raceways with *Superbike 2001* (\$19.99). In this incredibly beautiful and accurate motorcycle sim, you can modify the game enough so that it can be played like an arcade style racer, or tweak up the difficulty to make it more realistic.

We know that's a lot to take in, but there are a couple more big bundles that we consider the best buys of the year in terms of gaming power for your hard-earned dollars:



Strategy Game Room — \$10.99

Civilization II, *MechCommander Gold*, and *Worms: Armageddon* all in the same box for just over \$10 — now this is a little bit of heaven. We'd recommend

spending that much, or even more, on *Civilization II* alone. It is and will remain as one of the best strategy games ever created, combining diplomacy, economics, military strategy, and exploration into a masterpiece that will take up residency in the gaming hall of fame. *MechCommander Gold* isn't the most perfect game around, but it's still fun, and who can really argue with commanding a squad of heavily armed Battle Mechs? *Worms: Armageddon* is no slouch, either. If you've ever dreamed of commanding an army of gun-toting annelids, then this is the game for you. This is one of the silliest titles we've ever played, but also one of the most incredible in terms of its scope and playability, and you just may begin to think of your worms as simey little heavily-armed chess pieces.

Totally Unreal — \$19.99

If you're an FPS fan, this may just be the big winner of the bunch. This package comes with copies of the original *Unreal* and the mission pack *Return to Na Pali*, as well as *Unreal Tournament Game of the Year Edition*. This is the value of the year, folks. There are still a whole lot of people playing *Unreal Tournament* online, so you shouldn't have any problems hooking up a game after you've beaten the hell out of the *Unreal* single player games. While the engine is getting a bit aged at this point, gameplay is still tight. If you're a fan of some fast frugging fun, you won't be disappointed by this purchase.

Wrap It Up, I'll Take It

These are just a few of the gems that you can find if you look hard enough. After you've played all of these games (that should only take a couple of years) you can always check out <http://www.gonegold.com> where you'll find store-specific deals of the week showcasing sales and specials. Happy hunting! ■

— Dan Adams, IGNPC



Welcome to
IGN's 2001
BUYERS' GUIDE

With three major console companies battling it out with PC game makers for market share this holiday season, you can be sure that there will be a huge supply of excellent games for all the systems. It's not the first time in videogame history that three major players are simultaneously vying for your cash – but it certainly is a first that two consoles launched within a week of each other. On November 15, Microsoft entered the home console market with the Xbox and proved once and for all that it's not just about business software. Even the most die-hard Sony and Nintendo fans can't deny that the Xbox is a 3D powerhouse with plenty of support and some really cool features. If you think having a hard drive in your console doesn't make much of a difference, wait until you play your first game of *Tony Hawk* with your very own custom soundtrack. It often takes a newcomer to bring some fresh ideas to an established industry.

Not to be outdone by the rookie, the oldest of the three videogame makers has unleashed its third standalone home console, the Nintendo GameCube. Eager not to repeat the mistakes it made with

the N64, Nintendo teamed up with all-new partners like IBM, Panasonic, and ATI to create its most balanced platform yet. GameCube arrived with a much more flexible storage medium and the most diverse launch lineup in Nintendo history. Add to that Nintendo's extensive selection of famous franchises and characters as well as the promise of Game Boy Advance connectivity, and it's hard to see how GameCube could fail.

Last but not least, Sony's PlayStation 2 continues to conquer the world, unfazed by the new (and old) competition. With excellent sequels to PS one hits as well as a slew of new original titles, PS2 is on its way to topple the NES as the most popular gaming machine in the world. Don't let the fact that the console is a year older than the Xbox and GameCube fool you. PS2 still packs plenty of power and is likely to dominate the market for a long time to come.

One thing is for certain, there's never been a more exciting time for gamers.



WHICH PLATFORM SHOULD I BUY?

Deciding on the right gaming platform isn't easy. Should you go for the PS2 so that you can trade games with your best friend? Should you buy an Xbox? A GameCube? Or perhaps a Game Boy Advance or a new PC system? It all boils down to your personal preferences. Do you want your game system to double as a DVD player, or is it all about the games? What are your favorite game genres or franchises?

Luckily, there is no wrong choice this time around. Unlike with previous consoles like the Saturn or 3DO, you won't have to worry that support will suddenly dry up and you'll end up with an oversized doorstop. PC gaming is as popular as ever, Nintendo and Sony are certainly not going anywhere, and Microsoft has committed more money to the marketing of its Xbox console than any other company in this industry has before. If you're all about RPG games, you certainly don't want to buy a GameCube at this point. But if you're looking to relive the glory of SNES classics like Mario, Zelda and Metroid, then it's your platform of choice.

If we with these questions in mind that we have assembled this Holiday Buyer's Guide. Over the next couple of pages, IGN's team of seasoned editors breaks down the different hardware options for you and supplies lists of the hottest titles this holiday season and beyond.

The following sections are pretty self-explanatory, but keep in mind that directly comparing system specs can be misleading. A gaming machine's overall performance is determined not only by its raw clock speed, but by the overall balance of the architecture, the bells and whistles, and last but certainly not least, the quality of the software. So check out the best each platform has to offer — and let us help you decide which gaming system is right for you.

CONSOLE SUPPORT

To find out exactly how many games are coming out in the near future for the different gaming consoles, we called up all the major publishing houses and begged them for some numbers. While a couple of companies were unwilling to divulge the info and gave us low estimates of their works in progress, this chart should give you an idea of which platforms what companies are focusing on. Activision fans, for example, can rest assured that each platform gets its share of Tony Hawk and Spider-Man games, while friends of Eidos' games might want to stick with PS2 for now. Some companies, for one reason or the other, were not able to announce their support for one of the platforms as of yet — so a cryptic "TBA" is all you're getting in that case. Note also that these numbers do not include titles already on the market.

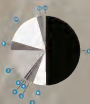
PUBLISHER NUMBERS

GAME COMPANY	GCN	XBOX	PS2	DC	GBA
3DO	2	0	16	0	13
Acclaim	12	5	9	0	3
Activision	24	31	33	0	34
Age of Empires	1	TBA	2	0	TBA
Atari	9	0	2	0	0
BAM	1	2	2	0	9
Bethesda	3	1	1	0	0
Capcom	0	0	5	0	6
Comcast	0	4	5	3	1
Conspiracy	3	3	3	0	11
Cosmic Force	2	0	5	0	3
Eidos	TBA	11	25	0	TBA
Electronic Arts	14	10	0	0	1
Fox Interactive	2	2	2	0	2
Freemove	0	0	0	0	0
Konami	2	0	0	0	6
Midway	0	0	0	0	0
Konami	TBA	10	12	0	10

(GCN: GameCube, PS2: PlayStation 2, DC: Dreamcast, GBA: Game Boy Advance)

If you're curious what other games these companies have worked on in the past (or are working on for the future), then it's time to pay a visit to our quasi-secret publisher archive. Just point your browser at http://games.ign.com/publishers/pub_a.html and continue on from there... Or, if you're looking for developers, go to http://games.ign.com/developers/dev_a.html.

GENRE CHART



Do you have a preferred gaming genre? We have put together these helpful little charts based on each platform's current (and future) game lineup. Naturally, a lot can change over the next few months when new titles are announced, but you can already see key differences between the systems in terms of genre distribution. Note that PC and PS2 have much larger game libraries than the other platforms. So even though 38% of PS2's games are sports titles, four times as many sports games are available for the system than for GameCube, for example.

SPECS

CPU: Intel Processor

- 733MHz
- Internal Cache: 16KB Instruction Cache (2-way), 8KB Data Cache (2-way)
- External Bus: 3.2 GB/sec
- Memory: 64MB shared RAM

Graphics Processor: NVIDIA X-Chip

- Clock Frequency: 250 Mhz
- Embedded Memory: 64MB shared RAM
- Maximum Resolution: 1920 x 1080
- HDTV Support: Yes
- Simultaneous Textures: 4
- Compressed Texture: 8:1
- Rendering Functions: Texture Mapping, Bump Mapping, Fogging, Alpha Blending, Bi-linear and Tri-linear Filtering, MIP Mapping, Full Scene Anti-aliasing, Multi-pass Rendering, Vertex Shading, Compressed Textures.

Audio Processor

- Audio Channels: 256
- 3D Audio: 64 3D Channels
- Sampling Frequency: 48 KHz
- MIDI SLS2 Support: Yes
- AC3 Encoded Game Audio: Yes
- Dolby 5.1 Support: Yes
- DTS DVD Playback Support: Yes

Main Memory

- 64MB shared RAM

Disc Drive

- 28x DVD-ROM (Dual Layer)
- Storage Capacity: 4.7GB
- DVD movie playback: Yes
- CD music playback: Yes

Hard Drive

- 10GB hard disk

Miscellaneous

- 4 Controller Ports
- 2 Memory Card Slots Per Controller
- Broadband enabled
- Analog AV Output: Composite, S-Video, Component (some outputs sold as add-on)
- BMB Memory Card (add-on)
- DVD Playback Kit for DVD playback on Xbox (add-on)

Weight and Dimensions

- Weight: 9 lbs., 10.3 oz
- System Dimensions: 4" (H) x 12" (W) x 8" (D)

Price: \$299.99

XBOX HARDWARE ::

Buy this system if... you want options for your varied tastes, and you want it delivered with the most hardware power seen in a console system to date. What's great about the Xbox so far is that nearly all interests are covered – games for younger players, fighting games, racing simulations, adventure platformers and even a party game are ready for you at launch. Most importantly, if you're interested in online play and online communities, then the Xbox provides you with the most exciting options of all. The Xbox is truly what next-generation means.



1 Disc Tray

Place the DVD or CD of your choice in this automatic tray.

2 On/Off Button

Small button allows you to start/stop system. With game disc in tray, it auto loads game. Without disc, you can access the settings and music utilities.

3 Eject button

Large circular button to open tray

4 Four Controller ports

Input slots for controller devices.

5 Jewel

Xbox "jewel" for product branding (no, it doesn't light up).

6 "X" Shape

Design element.

7 Broadband Connection

Ethernet ready port for use with your existing broadband connection.

8 Multi-AV Connector

Universal AV connection to back of system allows different add-on connector setups such as HDTV, S-Video, standard AV, and RCA, while only taking up one small connection slot on the system.

9 AC In

The slot for connecting the power cable.

10 Memory Unit

This 64MB memory card provides you with the mobility to move your saves to another Xbox system. While the Xbox hard drive can save any game, you'll have to use a memory card if you want to transport your saves. Note: The memory card cannot hold customized music that has been saved to the hard drive.

11 "Trip-Proof" Dongle

The Xbox controller comes equipped with 9.5 feet of cord, as well as a safety dongle that allows the cord to "unlock" from the connector to avoid accidents. As one developer told us, "That dongle has saved our company thousands of dollars in near disasters."



THE CONTROLLER ::

The Xbox controller is one of the largest and heaviest controllers to date which, depending on your hand size and your gaming philosophy, is either a good or a bad thing. The analog triggers feel fantastic, and the analog sticks are really responsive. However, because of the cramped space, button placement definitely takes some getting used to. Rumble is strong and powerful, and games are already taking full advantage of its capabilities. As for the cord, it's a whopping 9.5 feet long, so you'll have no problem sitting back comfortably on your couch, even if the console is across the living room.



Dead or Alive 3



DVD remote



Unreal Championship

XBOX OUTLOOK ::

The state of the Xbox, from now until the first few months after launch, is so bright it hurts. There's no doubt that the system is launching with some truly killer apps, but that's just the beginning. From the start, Microsoft has promoted the Xbox as an online system, and at this point we're only seeing the tip of the iceberg, when it comes to the experiences you'll have in the next six months, or the next few years for that matter.

While the Xbox can play DVDs, to play movies on your system you'll have to purchase the DVD Playback Kit, which consists of an IR port that fits into one of the controller ports, and a DVD remote. This was one way to ensure that Xbox costs were kept down as far as possible. Having the Xbox come with DVD features out of the box meant having to pay the license on every console, but now you're doing it yourself with one little purchase.

From the start, Microsoft has promoted the Xbox as an online system. While you'll be enjoying some game first and third party titles for the first few months, you'll have to wait a few months until you're able to play a game like *Unreal Championship* online. The game changes the *Unreal* formula to make it more console friendly, and for the first time that doesn't in any way mean uglier or easier. When *Tony Hawk 3* makes an appearance on the Xbox next year, it will have full online support without you having to purchase a hard drive or hook up any extra hardware. With built-in broadband support, you'll be able to play a smoother, faster online game that can finally push the hardware to its limits, instead of having to meet the lowest system requirements like on the PC.

Those are just the obvious uses. When *DoA 3* is released in Japan, Tecmo promises some additional unreleased surprises for the Japanese version that won't be available in the US version we'll be playing in November. Unlike the past, however, you won't have to pay for the import version. The creator of the game has already mentioned in an interview that he'll be using the broadband connection to ensure that American gamers will also have an opportunity to enjoy the same additional features—downloads anyone?

Microsoft is enforcing a strict "no patch" policy for games, so don't fret that you'll have to download stuff to fix your buggy game. What you can look forward to, however, are new skins, levels, characters and bonuses for your favorite titles.

SPECS

Controller

- Eight-way directional pad
- Two analog triggers
- Two analog sticks
- Six pressure-sensitive analog buttons
- Two digital ("Back" and "Start") buttons
- Two slots for memory cards
- Rumble feature
- 9.5 foot cord
- Special "no dropping the console on the floor" cord dangle

XBOX

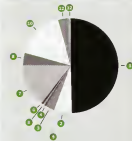
Pros

- One of the strongest launch lineups in years, with some system sellers in multiple categories.
- Graphical quality—bump mapping, dynamic lighting, and vertex shading are a snap on the Xbox.
- It's got a broadband connection for online play out of the box.
- You can rip music from your CDs onto the Xbox hard drive and play your own hand-picked soundtracks in games that support the custom playlist feature.

Cons

- More expensive than the GameCube.
- It's heavy and bulky, so you won't be carrying this one over to a friend's house any time soon.
- You have to purchase an additional DVD kit to play DVDs on the system.
- You'll have to have a broadband account if you want to play online.

Genre Breakdown



- 1: Action • 2: Adventure • 3: Fighting • 4: Puzzle • 5: Other • 6: RPG • 7: Simulation • 8: Sports • 9: Strategy • 10: Wrestling • 11: Shooter • 12: Platform



NOT ON THE INSIDE?

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TOP 10 XBOX GAMES

of the holiday season >>>

Talk to people a year ago and it was a matter of finding out what Microsoft games would be worth playing – nowadays it's more about picking how many launch titles you can fit into your budget. It may have taken Microsoft a while to get the momentum going on the Xbox launch, but now it's here and kicking up a storm of excitement.

For the first time, a system is representing nearly ever game of gameplay at launch, for all age groups. Kids and adults can find quirky black humor and puzzle-solving in *Munch's Odyssee*, while old school PC fans can find hope in the future of *Halo*. Anime fanatics and hormonally bursting teenagers will enjoy the busy fighting of *DoA 3*, while gearheads can get into the fine details of racing through real cities with *Project Gotham*. The entire family can get into *Fuzion Frenzy*, the best party game for a system yet. There are a

whopping three snowboarding games at or around launch for the system, and the return of an old skateboarding favorite: *Tony Hawk 2K*. There's even the debut of the best surfing game on any system, hands down. Did we mention the return of big time grappling, both of the UFC and WWF variety? Cartoon characters, realistic simulations, arcade button-stompers and brain exercisers are all represented.

That's why we're here to help. With so much to choose from at or around launch, it's hard to decide what's best for your wallet. You can't afford to buy all of them, and you don't want to get stuck with a flop when you find out later than you could have gotten a hit. It's always best to go for the games that you know you'll love in an instant, but we hope that our top ten will get you to look at a few games that you may have otherwise passed over, and maybe even introduce you to something completely new.



AMPED

Publisher: Microsoft | Developer: Microsoft | Genre: Sports | Release Date: 11/15/2001 | Street Price: \$49.99
ESRB Rating: E

Never has a snowboarding game truly captured the experience of exploring a huge mountain like *Amped*. While most snowboarding titles may have lengthy rides, you're still stuck on a basic track, with little freedom to explore on your own. *Amped* is based on real mountains like California's Snow Summit, Utah's Brighton and Vermont's Stratton, all of which play and feel like the real thing. The draw distance is unbelievable — on certain high jumps, you can see all the way to the bottom of the slope, with no fogging. Gameplay is similar to *Tony Hawk*, but the emphasis is on speed and height, as well as just plain exploration. On top of the giant mountain, you can expect a gangster soundtrack of over 150 songs from indie bands that you can customize to your tastes. You can even integrate your own soundtracks to make your ride all your own. If you love snowboarding, this will test your skills, as well as your new system's limits.



DARK SUMMIT

Publisher: THQ | Developer: Radical Entertainment | Genre: Sports | Release Date: 11/15/2001 | Street Price: \$49.99
ESRB Rating: T

Think of it this way — It's not that there are so few games to talk about that we've got two snowboarding games in the top ten, it's that the snowboarders hitting around launch are that good. *SSX Tricky*, *Amped*, and *Dark Summit* are all stellar titles, and while it would be easy to put *Tricky* in our list since it's a guaranteed favorite, we've grown to love the cool, unique design of *Dark Summit*. It's not a racer, but it's not a *Tony Hawk* alike, either. Think of it as the D&D RPG of snowboarding games, and you'll begin to get the picture. You've got a ton of tasks to accomplish while you attempt to unlock sections of the giant mountain, from finding bombs and avoiding guards to peeling off a certain set of tricks in a specific set of time. Combine the unique goals with the cool post-apocalyptic themes, and you'll see just how much new stuff *Dark Summit* brings to the genre.



DEAD OR ALIVE 3

Publisher: Microsoft | Developer: Tecmo | Genre: Fighting | Release Date: 11/15/2001 | Street Price: \$49.99
ESRB Rating: T

The one-on-one fighting game series *Dead or Alive* has taken a leap forward with every version, but has always remained in the shadow of other major fighters. With the PlayStation it had to compete with the Tekken series, and on the Dreamcast it shined, but was still overpowered by Namco's *Soul Calibur*. Now the third game promises to deliver the most beautiful fighting experience to date on any console, and it's launching with a brand new system. The design has been revamped to suit both casual gamers and hardcore fans alike, and the graphics have to be seen to be believed. Whether you're a gaming fanatic, a casual gaming fan, or someone that's looking for a reason to show off your new console to your friends, *DoA 3* is the game to pick for the Xbox.



FUZION FRENZY

Publisher: Microsoft | Developer: Blitz Games | Genre: Action | Release Date: 11/15/2001 | Street Price: \$49.99
ESRB Rating: E

The fun tends to be built in when it comes to multiplayer party games, but *Fuzion Frenzy* itself does a lot on its own to bring a room full of gamers to their feet. Detailed, grown-up looking characters battling their way through 45 testosterone-fueled mini-games is what next generation party games are all about. With all manner of races, endurance battles and combat games, *Fuzion Frenzy* should be the game that shows off the durability and brawny construction of the Xbox controller's sticks and buttons. Unlike party games on other systems, *Fuzion Frenzy* doesn't feature any kind of board game element, just players battling for tokens. The best feature is the actual "Fuzion Frenzy" mini-game that allows players to wager all of their tokens and instantly own the score at the end of a round of play. It's a 100% prediction that this will be the mini-game that will cause tempers to be lost, significant others to be annoyed, and drinks to be knocked over.



HALO

Publisher: Microsoft | Developer: Bungie | Genre: Action | Release Date: 11/15/2001 | Street Price: \$49.99
ESRB Rating: T

Microsoft might want to change the name of the system from Xbox to "The Console That Lets You Play Halo," because this is the very game that justifies their selling and you owning the Xbox. The standard for first person shooters on consoles has been redefined because of Halo and its outstanding visuals, frantic gameplay and refined storyline. You can shoot up aliens on any system, but on the Xbox you'll have to hunt 'em down and hope you have enough ammo and back up to survive. When it comes to Halo's value as a videogame, all you need to know is that the single player game is epic and the multiplayer game has more options than a fast food menu. In fact, you can even play the single player game in cooperation with a buddy. There are human and alien weapons and vehicles all at your disposal, and the game is brought to life with 5.1 digital surround sound. Get this game so you can get down like Sigourney Weaver whenever you like without feeling stupid.



MADDEN NFL 2002 ::

Publisher: Electronic Arts | **Developer:** Tiburon | **Genre:** Sports | **Release Date:** 11/15/2001 | **Street Price:** \$49.99
ESRB Rating: E

The ultimate football videogame on the ultimate game system will be heaven for the most hardcore pigskin fans. There's a strong possibility that a typical game of Madden 2002 on Xbox will take twice as long as normal because of all the replays you'll be doing after each play — every play looks that good, and you'll enjoy watching it again and again. Simply put, there's no more realistic NFL game in existence. Xbox is just the system to smooth out all of the edges and polish up some of the rough spots that you might see in other versions of Madden NFL 2002. Plus by the time you pick up your Xbox and get to playing, your favorite NFL squad should be knee deep in the playoff race...except for the Cowboys. You all should just pick up an NBA game, because the Mavs will be all that.

NHL 2002 ::

Publisher: Electronic Arts | **Developer:** EA Canada | **Genre:** Sports | **Release Date:** 12/12/2001 | **Street Price:** \$49.99
ESRB Rating: E

If Microsoft is aiming their system at a more mature demographic — one that goes on road trips, not field trips — then a copy of NHL 2002 will be a nice addition to their Xbox library. Countless hours spent in front of an NHL game scoring goal after goal is a fond memory for many older gamers and a current reality for many more, and there's no reason that shouldn't continue on the Xbox. It's a sad that familiarity with the players is how we as fans connect to the sport, and some of the players in NHL 2002 are so recognizable in the Xbox version that you might want to go ahead and knock out a couple of your teeth, grow a mullet, and become a full-fledged hockey fan. With collectible hockey cards, an emotion meter, and full customization of players and teams, the Xbox is coming along at the perfect time for hockey fans and graphic junkies alike.

ODDWorld: MUNCH'S DODDYSEE ::

Publisher: Microsoft | **Developer:** Oddworld Inhabitants | **Release Date:** 11/13/2001 | **Street Price:** \$49.99
ESRB Rating: T

If you haven't had a chance to play this action/adventure series on the PlayStation, then now's your chance to check it out like never before. The Oddworld series has taken black comedy to new heights — you're literally trying to stop an evil corporation from committing mass genocide and environmental destruction — while still delivering frustrating but fun gameplay for both your trigger finger and your brain. The newest game takes the series into beautiful 3D, and adds the new amphibious character Munch, a Gabbit who's the last of his species after his race has been wiped out by being used for lung transplants for the rich and evil Quakora. The game still keeps the puzzle-based focused of the original games while adding a new open-ended design that gives you full freedom to explore and solve the puzzles in a myriad of ways. It's funny, it's weird, it's unique, and it's only for Xbox.

TONY HAWK'S PRO SKATER 2X ::

Publisher: Activision | **Developer:** Treyarch | **Release Date:** 11/15/2001 | **Street Price:** \$49.99
ESRB Rating: RP

Fakesies and railslides are two of the best things to happen to videogames, and no Xbox library would be complete without a Tony Hawk game. Tony Hawk's Pro Skater 2X will be the first option for skating fanatics who want the best looking skating game around, but can't wait for Tony Hawk 3 to be released in early 2002. Combining levels from Tony Hawk 2 & 3 on the PlayStation plus five brand new Xbox levels, 2X also features the control scheme from the second TH game. With 2X you'll automatically catch up to what everybody else has been playing for the last two years but you're getting the best graphics and latest technology to boot. If you're two years behind in the Tony Hawk skills though, that's on you.

TRANSWORLD SURF ::

Publisher: Infogrames | **Developer:** Angel Studios | **Release Date:** 11/15/2001 | **Street Price:** \$49.99
ESRB Rating: T

Normally you'd see surfing titles somewhere beneath dating sims in terms of public excitement, but give TransWorld Surf an hour of your time and you'll change your thoughts on the matter completely. It isn't just the best game of its type on the Xbox; we'll go so far as to say that it's the best surfing game to date on any system. Like Tony Hawk, this game is all about technique and skill, while still keeping things fast and fun. Plus, you can impress your friends with the stunning wave physics and the realistic water effects. Exclude some of the world's biggest and best breakers, from Kim's Point and Hossegor to Yakuza, and pull off feakers, grab and take tricks, even free some dolphins and hop some breakers! A competition mode puts you up against the world's best surfers for top prize, while multiple multiplayer modes allow you to hit the waves with a friend, or take on three competitors for king of the waves. Wave shredding has never looked so good.



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FaceMasks™
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And Buttons



**AC and Car
Power Adapters**



**PowerPak™
And PowerPak EX™**
15 And 20 Hour
Rechargeable Battery Packs



2, 4, 5 Unreal Championship
2 Ego Concept
3 Blood Wake



That sea of Xbox green that seems to dominate your local videogame retailer is what you get when the Xbox launch happily coincides with the holiday shopping season. But even after you've absorbed all of the 2001 software, you're going to want more to kick off the New Year. We're happy to present our hottest picks for 2002, also known as the "The Next Wave of Games that Will Continue the Ass Kicking Tradition of Xbox." These are the very biggest games we expect to see three, six and twelve months from now for the Xbox. Read 'em and weep for joy.

HOT PICKS FOR 2002

coming to xbox

BLOOD WAKE

Publisher: Microsoft | Developer: Stormfront Studios | Genre: Action
Release Date: 01/2002 | Street Price: \$49.99 | ESRB Rating: T

Cool boats with big guns on some really fine looking water. This is why Blood Wake is one of those instances where less is actually more. You've seen vehicular combat in games like Twisted Metal: Black and you've seen pretty swirly waves in a game like Wave Race: Blue Storm. Jam those two together and you've got a rickrolling good time in Blood Wake. The numbers are as follows: 25 missions, nine different types of missions, ten boats, and 60 frames per second. It's no insult to say Blood Wake is the result when lowbrow fun meets high technology.

ENCLAVE

Publisher: Conspiracy Games | Developer: Stormfront Studios | Genre: Action
Release Date: Fall 2002 | Street Price: \$49.99 | ESRB Rating: RP

Enclave is the game that looks to take the characters and feel of a game like Warcraft and shift it into first person where you're the knight or ogre riding into battle. You can't call it a shooter because you're going to be using plenty of close range weapons on your enemies. Plus you can use assault and siege weapons for a significant strategic advantage.

Conspiracy Games wants to get a Team Fortress style of play but set in a swords and wizards universe. The result will be class based, class based, online multiplayer game that has every intention of rocking the house. You'll need that perfect mix of wizards, dwarves, wizards and whatnot to be successful and it will all be fueled by the graphics and processing power of the Xbox.

HUNTER: THE RECKONING

Publisher: Interplay | Developer: High Voltage | Genre: Action | Release Date: Spring 2002 | Street Price: \$49.99 | ESRB Rating: RP

It's almost a rule of thumb—you just have to have a zombie killing game somewhere in your lineup. Hunter: The Reckoning promises to offer more havoc and hordes of supernatural badasses than we've seen anywhere. The fact that one of the main characters is roughhousing biker dude with a big heart—and an even bigger axe—should be enough to bring this game to your attention.

Based on the world of White Wolf and boasting over 20 weapons, this one will definitely be worth checking out.

JET SET RADIO FUTURE

Publisher: Microsoft | Developer: Gas Powered Games | Genre: Action | Release Date: 02/2002 | Street Price: \$49.99 | ESRB Rating: T

Jet Set Radio Future, as it's known in Japan, should be such a wonderful experience on the Xbox that it'll spray paint the other X-titles on the shelves green with envy. If the Xbox ends up being the machine that brings all of the potential of Dreamcast to reality, it could very well be because of Smilebit's futuristic techno-stunt-skater.

Skating through a generic urban landscape and pulling off all kinds of tricks is so 1999. In Jet Set Radio Future, you're on rocket-powered skates sliding through a futuristic Japanese metropolis armed with nothing but a can of spray paint.



And while you're being scored by the new look of games like *Get Damage* on the Xbox or *Legend of Zelda* for the Nintendo GameCube, just remember the whole on-shading look was brought to life by the Jet Set and Grid games. Respect must be paid to the originators. At any given moment when you're watching the characters it looks like they're a flat, but intricate, image. Since everything is moving, whether it's the characters themselves or the camera that's behind them, you're always seeing them from an appropriate 3D perspective. Everything that's within the heavy black lines that define the character however is made to look as 2D as an Andy Capp cartoon strip.

If for no other reason than that the Dreamcast's lifespan ended too soon, Jet Set Radio Future on the Xbox is a wonderful thing because this unique title will finally get the attention – from the hardware and consumers – it deserves.

PROJECT EGO

Publisher: TBA | **Developer:** Big Blue Box Studios | **Genre:** RPG | **Release Date:** Late 2002 | **Street Price:** \$49.99 | **ESRB Rating:** RP

Pencil in *Project Ego* as one of the second, or more likely third, generation Xbox games that will really show what Microsoft's machine is capable of. You can use the term roleplaying game to describe *Ego* for now, but IGN believes that we may be looking at an entirely new genre of videogame. You begin the game as a teenage male or female character, and from there you set out on a lifetime of adventures that will literally change your character for as long as he or she lives.

Every activity your character goes through has meaning and will result in some sort of physical or even social change later on. If you spend a lot of time laboring and lifting heavy objects, your guy or gal will develop bigger muscles and increased strength. Your character will have increased intelligence if you consistently use your wits to solve problems and advance in the game. Hair grows and needs to be cut, or not cut as it were, to your liking.

We're not sure what activities will be mandatory in *Project Ego*, since the storyline is as closely guarded a secret as Michael Jackson's Neverland Ranch. However we do know that you will be able to choose paths of righteousness or evil in your quest to become the most powerful being in the universe.

Every decision you make, every task you accomplish, and the way you accomplish it will have good or evil associated with them. So if there are multiple ways of accomplishing something and you always choose the one that's most obnoxious or violent, *Dark Vader* had better look out, because you're heading down the path of darkness, baby. If you always use intelligence and kindness, you're on the stairway to heaven, going up.

If you're heading down the path of darkness, your character will start talking on evil characteristics and they will actually look like the bad guy/gal you've made them into. As a result, the non-playable characters you encounter will react to your evil appearance and act accordingly. At this point, we just don't know how far Big Blue Box will go with this element, although it does seem to be one of the main attractions of the game.

The not-to-frost news about *Project Ego* is that such an ambitious project coming from a subsidiary of Peter Molyneux's Lionhead Studios could take years to complete. They're perfectionists that dream big, so anxious *Project Ego* fans may add a few wrinkles and take on an evil quality or two in the time it takes for this extraordinarily ambitious game to get done.

Of course there are dozens of games that we've left out of our 2002 list, but that doesn't mean we've forgotten about them. We just wanted to make sure to point out the games that we're aware of and that will have the same kind of buzz the launch titles gave us. We know they've got a whole slew of teams under their umbrella working on Xbox games as you read this. To keep up with all the latest Xbox information, be sure to check out IGN Xbox at <http://xbox.ign.com>.

SOUL CALIBUR 2

Publisher: Namco | **Developer:** Namco | **Genre:** Fighting | **Release Date:** Spring 2002 | **Street Price:** \$49.99 | **ESRB Rating:** RP

Just about the time *Dead or Alive 3* will have beat you down for the 9000th time, *Soul Calibur 2* will come around, weapons in hand, to finish the job. The super popular fighting game that helped launch the Dreamcast is coming out for the GameCube as well, but as usual it's okay to expect the most from the Xbox version. We expect new characters, new levels, and of course new weapons for SGC2 – and at least the same number of play modes as the original. Multiple outfits for the warriors will be nice too, because Mitsunaga needs another alternative besides the 1980s-style ponytail look.

THE THING

Publisher: Universal | **Developer:** Computer Artworks | **Genre:** Action | **Release Date:** Spring 2002 | **Street Price:** \$49.99 | **ESRB Rating:** RP

You're always touching dangerous territory when you try to make a cool game out of a cool movie, but *The Thing* could change all of that. The Xbox is powerful enough to handle whatever special effects Hollywood can come up with, and we can't wait to see how it splits the head of a human-monster thing in real time. The game picks up where the 1982 Kurt Russell movie left off and puts you in the role of a soldier who has to find out what happened way down in Antarctica.

It's all about trust as you'll have to pay attention to how other characters in the game are relating to you and to each other. Somebody has "E," and the collective paranoia will end your mission quickly if you don't consistently show them that (a) you're not infected and (b) you're totally in control of the situation. All of that fancy brainy talk and guns too? You gotta love it.

UNREAL CHAMPIONSHIP

Publisher: Infogrames | **Developer:** Digital Extremes | **Genre:** Action | **Release Date:** 03/2002 | **Street Price:** TBA | **ESRB Rating:** RP

One of the biggest games lurking on the horizon for Xbox has got to be *Unreal Championship*. The buzz on this one should develop into an all our ears by the time spring rolls around because it could represent a turning point in console gaming as a whole. Digital Extremes is taking the popular *Unreal* engine and building the rest from scratch specifically for the Xbox – always a good thing – and this should be one of the killer applications when Xbox kicks off its online gaming program. By the time *Unreal Championship* arrives, we might not even recognize it as a member of the *Unreal* family of games. To begin with, there are original weapons, characters and vehicles in UC. And no, that's not a mistake. *Unreal Championship* on the Xbox is going to have vehicles like we saw in *Tiber* for the PC.

The weapon models look frighteningly realistic, but then that's what we've come to expect from *Unreal* games. You won't be acquiring these weapons by simply running around and picking them up. You'll only have access to whatever weapons you've unlocked, but the good thing is they're all yours once you've opened them up. The catch is you have to find a resource depot that actually has ammo or health in it and stop by for a fill up.

Team play will definitely be the difference between *Unreal Championship* and all previous shooters. Even without its online capabilities, building, managing and maintaining a team of skilled combatants promises to be something new and groundbreaking for Xbox. Add in the likelihood that you'll be able to take your battle-tested squad online and search for willing foes and we could be looking at the very bright future of gaming.

SPECS

CPU: IBM "Gekko" PowerPC

- Manufacturing Process: .18 micron copper wire technology
- Clock Frequency: 485 MHz
- Internal Cache: 256KB L2 Cache
- External Bus: 1.3 GB/s peak

Graphics Processor: ATI "Flipper"

- Manufacturing Process: .18 micron embedded DRAM process
- Clock Frequency: 182 MHz
- Embedded Memory: 3M8 1T SRAM
- Simultaneous Textures: 8
- Rendering Functions: Subpixel Anti-aliasing, 8 Hardware Lights, Alpha Blending, Virtual Texture Design, Multitexturing, Bump Mapping, Environment Mapping, MIP Mapping, Bilinear Filtering, Trilinear Filtering, Anisotropic Filtering

Audio Processor: Macronix 16-bit DSP

- Simultaneous Voice: 64
- Sampling Frequency: 48 KHz
- 16MB 81MHz DRAM (shared)
- 3D Audio: Yes

Main Memory: "Splash"

- 24 MB MoSys 1T-SRAM

Disc Drive

- Proprietary 3" 1.5GB optical disc
- DVD Movie Playback: No
- CD Music Playback: No

Miscellaneous

- 4 Controller Ports
- 2 Memory Card Slots
- Analog AV Output: Composite, S-Video, Component
- Digital Video Output: 480p progressive scan HDTV compatible
- 2 Serial Ports
- High-speed Parallel Port
- Modem Enabled: 56k Modem Adapter (add-on)
- Broadband Enabled: Broadband Adapter (add-on)
- Hard Drive: No (future add-on?)

Weight and Dimensions

- Weight: 3 lbs.
- System Dimensions: 4.3"(H) x 5.3"(W) x 6.3"(D)

Price: \$199.99

GAMECUBE HARDWARE ::

Buy this system if... you love Nintendo games and were a fan of the NES, SNES, and Nintendo 64. GameCube's biggest appeal is its ability to offer Nintendo's famous franchises such as *Zelda*, *Mario*, *Pokémon*, and *Metroid*—all of which are already in development for the console. Nintendo is renowned for creating some of the best software in the world, and it's all exclusive to GameCube. Of course, that doesn't mean it won't be getting any help from third parties. Top franchises from the sports, adventure, racing, action, and survival horror genres will grace the system. Offering up four controller ports, multiplayer games will be heavily supported. As an added bonus GameCube links up to the Game Boy Advance, offering all-new ways to play videogames.



- Disc Tray**
Custom designed for tiny 1.5GB discs, measuring 3" in diameter
- Power Light**
The orange, silver shaped light indicates an active power supply and may increase intelligence.
- Controller Ports**
Small circular dents mark controller ports one through four. The controller ports are extremely tiny, measuring under .5" in diameter.
- Memory Card Slots**
GameCube contains two slots for memory cards, roughly 1.5" in width.
- Handle**
Take hold of the tough plastic handle for GameCube-friendly travel. Packing lunch inside GameCube not recommended.
- Analog AV Output**
Use composite or S-Video to send the picture to your TV. 100% compatible with former SNES and N64 outputs.
- Digital Video Output**
Display a crisp 480p progressive scan picture to compatible HDTVs via component cable.
- Serial Port 1**
Plug 56k Modem and Broadband adapter add-ons here for Internet access.
- Serial Port 2**
Another expansion bay for as of yet undisclosed add-ons.
- High Speed Port**
High-speed parallel port. No announced functionality to date.
- Memory Card Slot**
Nintendo's standard memory card has a .5MB storage capacity. Games such as Luigi's Mansion use three of the 59 useable blocks.
- Component Video Cable**
A high-end digital cable used to output a 480p progressive scan signal to compatible HDTVs. Not every game supports this mode, but the ones that do have increased contrast, saturation, and better resolution.



THE CONTROLLER ::

The GameCube controller is a departure from Nintendo's past and features an all-new button layout, analog shoulder triggers, built-in rumble, a small D-pad, and two analog sticks. The face buttons are centered around the large A-button and have specifically been designed so your thumb won't get lost. With your thumb centered on the A-button at all times you simply move left, up, or right to access B, Y, or X. Your index fingers comfortably rest in the deeply grooved, pressure sensitive R and L shoulder triggers, which have a secondary "digital click" function if fully depressed. Above the R trigger is a Z-button for quick turbos and extra functionality.



GCN Broadband Adapter



SL-GC10 "Cube" DVD Player



Wavebird Wireless Controller

GAMECUBE OUTLOOK ::

As usual Nintendo has several important peripherals and add-on accessories planned for the near future. When it originally unveiled the GameCube at its Space World 2000 event it showed off online technology, high-density data storage, wireless technology, and a way to use the Game Boy Advance with the GameCube.

While Nintendo isn't willing to commit to an online strategy until it proves it can be profitable, it has prepared for the future. For dial-up users, it will offer a 56k Modem Adapter that snugly fits into the bottom of GameCube. The Ethernet community will have the option of using the Broadband Adapter for higher access speeds. Currently Sega's Phantasy Star Online for GameCube is the only announced title that lets gamers play online. However, Nintendo has said it has online titles in the works that will be released in unison with the adapters.

Instead of promoting a hard drive, Nintendo is keeping things miniaturized by utilizing SD Memory Card technology. The stamp-sized memory cards will slide into a Memory Card Adapter for easy plug-and-play functionality. SD Memory Cards are made primarily by Panasonic, Toshiba and SanDisk, ranging in sizes from 8MB to 64MBs. In the future, data capacity will rise from 128MB to 2GB by the year 2003. Currently the 16MB card retails for approximately \$39.95, only marginally more expensive than the 8MB Sony PlayStation 2 memory card. No release date has been set.

Nintendo has also come up with a solution for reliable wireless control and a long-term battery life with its wireless Wavebird GameCube Controller. Using RF technology, the Wavebird can be used up to 10 meters (33 feet) away from your GameCube. More importantly you won't have to worry about coffee tables or friends' bodies getting in the way, as the signal is a radio frequency and will pass right through them. Wavebird outputs a one-way signal and will not be capable of rumble. It's one of the best announced peripherals for GameCube, but without any solid release dates gamers will have to deal with the short cords for just a while longer.

But what about DVD playback? While Nintendo is trying to distance itself from Sony and Microsoft by positioning the GameCube as a gaming-only system, it hasn't completely ignored fan requests for a more versatile set-top box. Through a deal with Japanese industry giant Matsushita, Japanese gamers will see the release of a special Panasonic GameCube. Named SL-GC10, this hi-tech piggy-back doubles as a full-fledged GameCube console and a state-of-the-art DVD player, complete with an optical output that can deliver Dolby Digital and DTS sound. The Panasonic-branded unit ships with a built-in timer (so parents can restrict their kids' playing and viewing time) as well as a custom remote. Whether you like the chrome and blue design or not, it certainly doesn't look like any other DVD player on the market. Sadly, Panasonic has not yet announced a US release date for the system - so don't expect to see this silver box stateside anytime soon.

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SPECS

Controller

- Eight way directional pad
- Two analog triggers with digital clicks
- Two analog sticks
- Five digital face buttons
- One digital shoulder button
- Rumble feature
- 6.5 foot cord
- Controllers ship in multiple colors

GAMECUBE

Pros

- Affordable mass-market price of \$199.
- Nintendo only home to Mario, Zelda, Metroid, Pokémon, and more.
- Small, lightweight, features a handle for easy traveling.
- Powerful graphics chip delivers lush visuals.
- Four controller ports for multiplayer action.
- Analog video cables compatible with S-Video and N64.
- Progressive scan compatible for HDTVs.
- Links up to Game Boy Advance.

Cons

- Optical disc storage capacity of 1.5GB (less than DVD).
- Online Modem and Broadband Adapter not included.
- Small Memory Card capacity.
- No digital audio output for Dolby Digital or DTS.
- Clunky power adapter.
- Only two memory card slots.

Genre Breakdown



IGN Roundtable

Always entertaining and often informative, IGN's Roundtable is a weekly debate in which the IGN editors discuss hot topics. Featured exclusively on IGN.com's premium site IGNinsider, past Roundtables have focused on such topics as Sega as a third party developer, the future of PC gaming, and the editors' favorite old school game remakes.

We've included a special exclusive IGN Roundtable for the Holiday Buyers' Guide so you can get a glimpse into the minds of what systems the IGN editors are dreaming of this holiday season.

Disaster! All of your current games, consoles, and computers – from the tiniest Game Boy game to your brand new PC – have been irretrievably lost. You only have \$500 to spend on games and systems for yourself this Christmas. How do you spend the money?

Steve Butts (IGNPC): I suppose I would use the \$500 to buy a new Dreamcast and a PS One. That way I'd have \$300 left over to buy games and memory cards. And since DC and PS games are really cheap right now, I figure I could get a lot more of them than if I spent the money on a newer system. On the game side, I'd get Soul Calibur, Tekken 3, Tony Hawk, ReVolt, Rayman, Metal Gear Solid, and, with whatever money I had left over, I'd be sure to buy a whole cropload of IGN Holiday Buyers' Guides.

Matt Casamassima (IGNcube): I'd of course shell out the \$199 for a GameCube and use the extra cash to pick up software for the system. Top on my list of must-haves would be Star Wars Rogue Leader: Rogue Squadron 2, Wave Race: Blue Storm, Super Monkey Ball, THPS3 and probably Madden NFL 2002. Being a total nerd, I'd also have to have the GameCube component cables for a progressive-scan connection, a memory card and two extra controllers for my (imaginary) friends.

Naren Bowling (IGN Xbox): I suppose spending the \$500 on belt cutters, a lockpick set, and a ninja outfit is out of the question. Those items are a great way to solve little "disasters" like these. But if you want to go the boring route – and I think we do here – going to a licensed videogame retail outlet and purchasing an Xbox, an extra controller, a memory card, and copies of Halo and Dead or Alive 3 would satisfy me like home cooking. I'd spend the leftover cash on one pack of Big Red chewing gum, a bottle of Pineapple Crush, and a box of Wheat Thins.

Craig Harris (IGNpocket): The holidays are all about giving, right? I'd buy myself and three of my best friends each a Game Boy Advance, as well as three link cables. And then I'd pick up a single copy of Advance Wars and Mario Kart: Super Circuit, since both these games have the ability to play up to four players with only one cartridge. That leaves around twenty bucks. I'd use the leftover for a really nice pair of socks...

Anthony Chua (IGNDreamcast): There's always the temptation of splurging on the newest stuff – Xbox, GameCube, or PS2. But if I lost ALL of my videogame consoles and games, and I had nothing to play, I'd buy both a SNES and Genesis. I could probably get both for under 75 bucks with a few controllers, leaving \$425 dollars to spend on Genesis and SNES games. Call me old-school or what not, but spending the entire holiday playing Gunstar Heroes, Actraiser, Final Fantasy III, Phantasy Star II, Revenge of Shinobi, and Mario Kart sounds like fun to me. Of course, since you can buy a DC at \$79.99, I'd probably pick one up knowing that a holiday break without Shemue 2 is...well, unbearable.

Dave Zuprke (IGNPS2): I like Anthony's idea of getting the old-school systems, but for me, it would come down to the amount and quality of software available – and in my opinion, this is where the PS2 has the advantage this holiday. I'd pick up the PS2 for \$299, a memory card for \$34.99, Devil May Cry for \$49.99, Metal Gear Solid 2 for \$49.99, and Gran Turismo 3 A-Spec for \$49.99. Since the PS2 also plays DVDs, I'd go the Columbia House route and get 4 DVDs for 49 cents each to fulfill my movie watching needs, and I'd still have enough cash left over for a pizza.

Dave Sulk (IGNPC): 500 bucks! Holy crap! That's like seven hundred dollars more than I have now. To hell with games, I'd be a freaking millionaire with 500 bucks! What is it, like 80 bones for a Dreamcast? Totally pick one of those bad boys up (someone who doesn't has mental deficiencies). Buy some used games for five to fifteen dollars apiece, being careful to save a hefty amount... With the money left over I'd go pick myself up a GameCube and a couple of titles.

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TOP 10 GCN GAMES

of the holiday season >>>

Nintendo GameCube, the successor to the Nintendo 64, has arrived. After five years the company has finally come out, guns smoking, with a next-generation console backed with growing third-party software support. For the system's launch period major publishers such as Electronic Arts, Applian, LucasArts, Sega, and many more will be extending their wide-ranging support to GameCube.

The GameCube launch couldn't come at a more busy time. Year after year the holiday season is just as exciting as it is complicated. This year in particular is especially taxing for videogame enthusiasts because all three next-generation home consoles—the GameCube, PlayStation 2, and Xbox—will go head-to-head for bragging rights. In the midst of all this gamers are forced to count their pennies, deciding what hardware and software is a worthwhile purchase.

This is why we've designed a Top 10 list. In alphabetical order we recommend the 10 best games for the console. In this section we outline what's hot and what's not for the Nintendo GameCube. Contrary to previous Nintendo launches the GameCube has a diverse collection of games to choose from. Whether you're a fan of football, racing, extreme sports, Star Wars, ghost-busting, or even monkeys (hey, who isn't?) GameCube has something to choose from. The hard part is narrowing down which games you will buy first, because unless you are going to spend \$500 on software alone you'll have to decide on just a few. Use this list to help identify which specific titles are best suited for you, but we also recommend you give these games a try one way or another. The good news is that you can't go wrong by buying any of the following games, because they're all good for their own reasons.



ETERNAL DARKNESS: SANITY'S REQUIEM

Publisher: Nintendo | **Developer:** Silicon Knights | **Genre:** Adventure | **Release Date:** TBA | **Street Price:** \$49.95 | **ESRB Rating:** M

Navigate the souls of twelve chosen ones, destined to save the human race from an unseen ancient species. *Eternal Darkness: Sanity's Requiem* will bring you to the edge of your seat with its ambient, horror-filled environments and innovative sanity meter. The sanity meter has been designed and tweaked with the help of Ph.D. holding psychologists to mess with your mind. Something as simple as a phone call with demonic voices on the other end of the line can affect your sanity—but it's your choice to pick it up or not. When you start to lose your sanity, many bizarre things will begin to take place. *Eternal Darkness* is backed with a deep gameplay system, intelligent camera system, and intriguing puzzle elements. With a gripping plot that takes place over 20 centuries, *Eternal Darkness* serves up a terrifying world that will drive you crazy, literally.



LUIGI'S MANSION

Publisher: Nintendo | **Developer:** Nintendo | **Genre:** Adventure | **Release Date:** 11/18/2001 | **Street Price:** \$49.95 | **ESRB Rating:** E

In *Luigi's Mansion* Mario's often forgotten brother has to save him from peril. It seems Mario's been taken captive by some mischievous ghosts and the only way Luigi can save him is to rid a four-story haunted mansion of ghosts. Using both analog sticks on the controller, you must suck up ghosts with the aid of a flashlight and vacuum. The experience can feel a lot like fishing, but is not just as simple as point-and-click, as you'll have to solve puzzles and upgrade your vacuum for shooting fire, water, and more. Featuring unparalleled lighting, shadowing, and physics effects the game won't fail to impress visually. This is a quirky game Nintendo fans can't help but love. However, gameplay time clocks in at under 10 hours so Mario lovers looking for a 40-hour platformer should be wary.



MADDEN NFL 2002

Publisher: Electronic Arts | **Developer:** Tiburon | **Genre:** Sports | **Release Date:** 11/18/2001 | **Street Price:** \$49.95 | **ESRB Rating:** E

Electronic Arts' Madden franchise has paved the way for football simulations, pushing the videogame experience into the believable ranks of reality. With a full NFL license, football enthusiasts can choose their favorite teams, which are accurately rated according to their most recent season. Each team comes equipped with its own custom playbook with special plays for your favorite running back or wide receiver. In the Franchise mode you can draft and play with the Houston Texans and take them to the Super Bowl if you're good enough. You can even create your own team, choosing your uniform, helmet design, and stadium. Featuring some of the most impressive animation, character modeling, and control around, *Madden NFL 2002* is without a doubt the premier choice for football buffs. Last but not least, the game supports 16:9 widescreen and Dolby Surround modes for home theater aficionados.



PIKMIN

Publisher: Nintendo | **Developer:** Nintendo | **Genre:** Strategy | **Release Date:** 12/03/2001 | **Street Price:** \$49.95 | **ESRB Rating:** E

When Shigeru Miyamoto, the perpetually inventive creator of *Mario* and *Zelda*, was relaxing in his garden he suddenly dreamed up the idea for *Pikmin*, a real-time strategy/adventure based on anti-life creatures of the same name. As a spaceman who has crash-landed on a peculiar planet inhabited by the *Pikmin*, you become their master and protector. In turn for helping you piece together the remains of your shattered space rocket, you must protect and cultivate the *Pikmin*. A simple control scheme lets you control hundreds of *Pikmin* at once, and with their help you'll eventually square off against giant creatures over ten times your size. As you progress the *Pikmin* can be used to build bridges and carve through rock walls. We give you full warning, *Pikmin* is a game you'll dream about. The seemingly simple concept will capture your imagination and form an addiction you won't soon break.



SSX TRICKY

Publisher: Electronic Arts | **Developer:** EA Canada | **Genre:** Sports | **Release Date:** 12/10/2001 | **Street Price:** \$49.95 | **ESRB Rating:** E

SSX Tricky is the sequel to last year's smash hit *SSX*, the franchise made its debut on the PlayStation 2, giving gamers the chance to perform out-of-this-world trick combos and catch incredible amounts of air. *SSX Tricky* for GameCube capitalizes on the extreme elements of the original and further fleshes out the trick system, hence the name. Choose from six new unique characters and compete in fantastic venues around the world. By performing tricks and combos you build up a turbo meter that can be used to catch means air and perform "uber tricks" for absurd points. Furthermore, every track is littered with incredible shortcuts that will have your heart beating overtime. EA has put a high priority on audio so the game features celebrity voice talent, an interactive DJ spinning music, and full surround sound. Sporting amazing facial animations, DVD extras, and an addictive stunt mode, *SSX Tricky* is the best and only choice for snowboarding on Nintendo GameCube.

SUPER MONKEY BALL ::

Publisher: Sega | **Developer:** Amusement Vision | **Genre:** Puzzle | **Release Date:** 11/18/2001 | **Street Price:** \$49.95 | **ESRB Rating:** E

Super Monkey Ball is a puzzle game that draws heavily on the famous handheld puzzle Labyrinth as well as retro arcade videogame Marble Madness. The concept is simple. Using only the analog control stick you tilt the game boards to roll monkeys placed inside balls to a goal line. The paths you must take get progressively more difficult as you advance through normal, advanced, and expert modes. The 50+ stages will have you pulling your hair out with frustration, but the desire to win and roll that monkey through the goal line will keep you playing. A great single-player mode, but *Super Monkey Ball*'s clever party games are even more irresistible. You and four friends can engage in accurate simulations of billiards, minegolf, or bowling where, of course, every ball is filled with a monkey. And, for all-out party action players can race, box, or duel for points in an imaginative target mini-game. Yes, it's true, monkeys rule.

SUPER SMASH BROS. MELEE ::

Publisher: Nintendo | **Developer:** HAL | **Genre:** Fighting | **Release Date:** 12/03/2001 | **Street Price:** \$49.95 | **ESRB Rating:** T

More than just an upgrade to the previous Nintendo 64 version, *Super Smash Bros. Melee* is a fighting game like no other. It features all of the classic Nintendo characters including big shots such as Mario, Link, Kirby, Samus, Yoshi, Pikachu, and many secret mascots yet to be revealed. The new single-player mode blends 2D and 3D worlds for the ultimate platform experience. The action-packed multiplayer mode is where the game's heart lies. The intuitive control scheme lets people of all ages partake in the hectic melee, but also provides depth for expert players. You won't be able to put the controller down as you pummel your friends round after round. For the ambitious, Nintendo has even added a tournament mode which allows for extravagant playoffs, complete with customizable names for entrants. *Super Smash Bros. Melee* is another addictive experience we recommend no multiplayer enthusiast do without, and it comes complete with a fully orchestrated Nintendo soundtrack that will knock your socks off.

STAR WARS ROGUE LEADER: ROGUE SQUADRON II ::

Publisher: LucasArts | **Developer:** Factor 5 | **Genre:** Action | **Release Date:** 12/18/2001 | **Street Price:** \$49.95 | **ESRB Rating:** T

Rogue Leader will utterly dazzle and mesmerize you with its realistic, true-to-movie graphics. Every ship is meticulously rendered right down to the dirt and explosion stains on its chassis. Based on the original trilogy, it's possible to blast through the narrow trenches of the first Death Star in an X-Wing, outangle the legs of AT-ATs with your Snowspeeder over the snow-covered plains of Hoth, or battle TIE Interceptors in the thick, sunset-washed skies of Cloud City. Harnessing the power deep inside of GameCube, *Rogue Leader* outperforms the rest, flaunting gorgeous visuals with a framerate of 60 frames per second. You will become immersed in the eleven primary campaign missions, all of which let you experience the Star Wars universe like never before. Bringing the videogame even closer to the movies, *Rogue Leader* is presented in crisp surround sound thanks to the cutting-edge technology of Dolby Pro Logic II. This is an experience that no Star Wars fan should deprive themselves of.

TONY HAWK'S PRO SKATER 3 ::

Publisher: Activision | **Developer:** Neversoft | **Genre:** Sports | **Release Date:** 12/10/2001 | **Street Price:** \$49.99 | **ESRB Rating:** T

Tony Hawk is a legend in both the skating and videogame universe. In collaboration with Neversoft, Activision has defined the standard for interactive extreme sports with the *Tony Hawk's Pro Skater* franchise. In the third edition, *Tony Hawk's Pro Skater 3*, you can take to the streets and vert ramps with your choice of 13 pro skaters including the likes of Tony Hawk, Steven Cabellero, and Rune Giffberg in nine fresh new levels such as Tokyo, Paris, Canada, Skater Island and more. Or, if you wish, you can create your own skater customizing his or her height, weight, skin tones, accessories and tattoos. But the look of your character is the last thing you'll be thinking about when you're pulling off mud combos and racking up hundreds of thousands of points. *THPS3* is just as addictive as its predecessors with an unbelievable amount of trick options, slick animations, and an all-new revert move for linking longer combos!

WAVE RACE: BLUE STORM ::

Publisher: Nintendo | **Developer:** NST | **Genre:** Racing | **Release Date:** 11/18/2001 | **Street Price:** \$49.95 | **ESRB Rating:** E

Wave Race: Blue Storm, the sequel to the N64 original, is the ultimate water top race experience. Skim over the pristine waters of eight different courses including the warm blue seas of the tropics, a moonlit shipyard, the glacier-packed arctic and more, all beautifully rendered with the power of GameCube. Not enough tracks for you? Each of the eight courses is diversified with multiple track layouts and five different weather settings including sunny, partly cloudy, drizzle, rain, and a severe thunderstorm mode. The weather settings can completely alter the face of a course changing the water level, decreasing visibility, and creating monstrous waves up to 10 feet in height! *Blue Storm* features a dedicated championship mode, stunt mode, and addictive multiplayer mode supporting up to four players. With its tight control and ambitious wave effects *Wave Race: Blue Storm* is in a league of its own. Don't miss out on this one.





1: Soul Calibur 2, 2: Star Fox Adventures, Onosaur Planet, 3: Kameo, 4: Legend of Zelda, 5: Metroid Prime, 6: Resident Evil, 7: Phantasy Star Online

Nintendo's US launch is by far its most impressive home console launch in the company's entire history. It has a plethora of first-party and second-party titles such as *Wave Race: Blue Storm* and (shortly after) *Super Smash Bros. Melee* as well as amazing third-party titles including *Star Wars Rogue Leader: Rogue Squadron II* and *Madden NFL 2002*. However, the launch period is hardly the end of GameCube software support. Many of Nintendo's most popular franchises will arrive on the console in 2002. To keep you abreast on the good things to come, check out this list of some of the most important future GameCube titles on the way.

HOT PICKS FOR 2002

coming to gamecube

:: KAMEO

Publisher: Nintendo | **Developer:** Rare | **Genre:** Adventure | **Release Date:** Summer 2002 | **Street Price:** TBA

Do you like some of the ideas behind *Pokémon*, but you can't get yourself to try and catch cute cuddly creatures? How about taking away Aggypuff, Pichachu and Bulbasaur and replacing them with giant fire-breathing dragons, hulking troll warlords, and flying pterosaurs? If that's more to your liking, then keep an eye out for Rare's upcoming action-adventure, *Kameo: Elements of Power*. This gorgeous looking game lets you capture, train, and command up to 60 creatures. Add to that a spunky heroine and smooth graphics and you've got another must-have game from the famous UK development house.

:: LEGEND OF ZELDA

Publisher: Nintendo | **Developer:** Nintendo | **Genre:** Adventure | **Release Date:** 11/2001 | **Street Price:** TBA

By far the most talked about and anticipated title for GameCube, the *Legend of Zelda* will make its appearance by the end of 2002. Fans of the vast 3D environments found in *The Ocarina of Time* and *Majora's Mask* will of course be pleased with GameCube version, but could be in for a rude awakening with the visual style that has essentially turned *Zelda* into a cartoon. Early footage shows Nintendo is using cel-shading technology, giving the characters and entire world a cartoon look. The animation is some of the most impressive and stylistic seen in videogames to date, which Nintendo suggests will make for a better gaming experience. *Zelda* will likely prove to be one of Nintendo's best titles on GameCube, but it's going to be hard for fans of the more realistic style seen on the N64 to get past the decidedly cartoon look.

:: MARIO KART FOR GAMECUBE

Publisher: Nintendo | **Developer:** Nintendo | **Genre:** Racing | **Release Date:** TBA | **Street Price:** TBA

In May of 2001, Nintendo showed an extremely short video of *Mario Kart* for GameCube in action. Only displaying Mario and Luigi racing on a flat, bump-mapped track, the demonstration was more an acknowledgement that the game is in development than an actual presentation of the gameplay. The kart and character models were extremely detailed and so well animated that you could see them using both the brake and gas pedals. Expect the same addictive multiplayer racing experience found in the previous versions, only this time the graphics will be incredibly detailed.

:: MARIO SUNSHINE

Publisher: Nintendo | **Developer:** Nintendo | **Genre:** Platform | **Release Date:** Summer 2002 | **Street Price:** TBA

This is one of Nintendo's biggest titles in development for GameCube. It is the company's mascot and is a franchise famous for pushing 3D platform-based gaming forward. A brief snippet of *Mario Sunshine* was shown at Space World 2001 in August, but out of fear of revealing too much Nintendo limited the footage of basic gameplay. A much-improved Mario model with a bushier mustache frantically jumped off of the walls, wires, and rooftops of a village. A mysterious contraption was strapped to his back and silvery puddles of sunshine littered the level. The game itself looks like a visually improved *Super Mario 64* with a somewhat more realistic look. Mario fans should keep an eye on this one, set for release sometime in Summer 2002.



:: METROID PRIME

Publisher: Nintendo | **Developer:** Retro Studios | **Genre:** Adventure | **Release Date:** Fall 2002 | **Street Price:** TBA

Samus Aran, the famous heroine of Nintendo past is returning to GameCube in full 3D for the first time. Nintendo is branding Metroid Prime as a first-person adventure, claiming it will combine first-person shooter elements with 3D adventure exploration. Diehard fans of the series clamoring for the same exploration-heavy adventure gameplay might be in for a more action-oriented experience, as the first footage of the game demonstrates a great deal of first-person shooting. However, Zelda-creator Shigeru Miyamoto is hard at work on perfecting the controls and gameplay to try to meet fans' expectations. Metroid Prime will be released in late 2002.

:: PERFECT DARK 2

Publisher: Nintendo | **Developer:** Rare | **Genre:** Action | **Release Date:** TBA | **Street Price:** TBA

Another title Nintendo is keeping in the dark (get it?), Perfect Dark 2 has been in development by England-based second party Rare for some time. After the team behind GoldenEye 007 completed the original Perfect Dark, which went on to be a million seller, it immediately began recruiting top talent for the sequel. Expected to be deep into development for GameCube, Perfect Dark 2 is Rare's most cared for game. No screenshots or details have been released, but it is expected to rival the efforts of all home console first-person shooters, offering a more simplistic approach to control as well as an extremely deep multiplayer mode which GoldenEye and Perfect Dark are famous for.

:: PHANTASY STAR ONLINE

Publisher: Sega | **Developer:** Sonic Team | **Genre:** RPG | **Release Date:** TBA | **Street Price:** TBA

Sega will bring an upgraded version of its Phantasy Star Online: Version 2 to GameCube next year. PSO is the first announced game that will let GameCube owners go online. You'll be able to meet up with up to three friends or foes across the globe to conquer a fantastical world in a real-time RPG setting. Extras include new modes (such as Soccer) and a dedicated Battle arena that lets players square off against opponents. There are also two new character classes exclusive to the GameCube version. PSO for GameCube is not compatible with the Dreamcast version, and will be released when Nintendo has a solid online strategy in place.

:: POKEMON FOR GAMECUBE

Publisher: Nintendo | **Developer:** HAL | **Genre:** TBA | **Release Date:** TBA | **Street Price:** TBA

Nintendo is keeping its Pokémon title under a heavy shroud of secrecy. Nintendo president Hiroshi Yamauchi and high-placed executives within the company admitted that a Pokémon title is in development for GameCube but would not talk about specifics. The new game may feature stadium-based gameplay, RPG elements from the Game Boy versions, or a combination of both. Interestingly, the Pokémon for Game Boy Advance version is scheduled to hit the market at the same time as the GameCube version, suggesting the two will link up for the ultimate Pokémon experience. Look for more details in the coming months.

Lack of third-party support was a big problem with the N64, and it looks like GameCube will be well covered in this area. While it's off to a slow start (when compared to Xbox and PS2), GameCube will get major support from the biggest names in the business next year. Look forward to Gaillon, Sonic Adventure 2, Duke Nukem Forever, Rayman, WWF WrestleMania, Ridge Racer, and plenty of sports titles from EA, Midway, Konami, and Sega. And if you're starving for some old-fashioned GoldenEye action, prepare yourself for an all-new Bond adventure from TWINE team Eurocom and EA Games. For up-to-date info on the latest GameCube titles, be sure to visit IGNcube at <http://cube.ign.com>.

:: RESIDENT EVIL

Publisher: Capcom | **Developer:** Capcom | **Genre:** Adventure | **Release Date:** Summer 2002 | **Street Price:** TBA

The game that invented the survival horror genre, Resident Evil, is being remade with vastly improved visuals so glorious they'll be the only thing to keep your blood running hot in the face of the ghastly undead. Shinji Mikami, series creator, wanted to perfect the title with ultra-realistic graphics, new camera direction, and improved scares. Using an amazing new technology the Resident Evil remake features brilliant lighting and shadowing set on the backdrop of a gorgeously pre-rendered world so detailed even the blades of grass animate. RE1 is your one-stop destination for a heart-pounding thrill ride. And once you've caught your breath, get ready for Resident Evil Zero as well as the highly anticipated Resident Evil 4.

:: SOUL CALIBUR 2

Publisher: Namco | **Developer:** Namco | **Genre:** Fighting | **Release Date:** Winter 2002 | **Street Price:** TBA

Soul Calibur 2, the sequel to what is considered to be one of the best 3D fighters in existence is on its way to GameCube in late 2002. It will feature new characters such as Cassandra, the younger sister of Sophitia, and Hong Yung Sung, who serves for the Coastal Defense Force. Soul Calibur 2 will contain the same 3D fighting style but in all new arenas, many of which are bigger and fleshed out with more architecture than ever before. More importantly, the characters will possess all new attacks, blocks, throws, and maneuvers, which will be backed by incredibly detailed motion capture animations. Can you help but be instantly enamored with SC2?

:: STAR FOX ADVENTURES: DINOSAUR PLANET

Publisher: Nintendo | **Developer:** Rare | **Genre:** Adventure | **Release Date:** Q3/2002 | **Street Price:** TBA

Originally in development for the Nintendo 64, Star Fox Adventures: Dinosaur Planet has been completely revamped for the GameCube. The gameplay draws heavily on Nintendo's own Legend of Zelda: The Ocarina of Time and Star Fox 64, mixing elements of an adventure/RPG and action-shooter for a diverse gameplay experience. The game is one of the most beautiful on GameCube, sporting lush environments, towering indoor environments, and monstrous boss figures. Fox will occasionally hop into his Arwing and take off into outer space, delivering an experience almost identical to previous Star Fox titles with power ups and familiar flight physics. This is an epic quest that is not to be missed.

:: TURKOVOLUTION

Publisher: Acclaim | **Developer:** Acclaim Studios Austin | **Genre:** Action | **Release Date:** Winter 2002 | **Street Price:** TBA

Acclaim is vowing to bring back its biggest and most lucrative franchise with a bang. While later entries into the series failed to recapture the smooth feel of the first game, Turko creator Dave Dornier and his team are promising to go back to the roots with Turko: Evolution and dazzle GameCube fans with gigantic dinosaurs and even nuclear weapons. Packing detailed visuals and surround sound, this vastly improved Turko sequel will let players once again travel to the Lost Lands to battle his original prehistoric enemies. Look forward to fast-paced action and hopefully plenty of customizable multiplayer modes like in Rage Wars.

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(coming soon)

ShadowBlade™
Arcade Stick
(coming soon)

SPECS

CPU: Sony 128-bit "Emotion Engine"

- Manufacturing Process: .18 micron aluminum technology
- Clock Frequency: 284.912 MHz
- Internal Cache: 16 KB Instruction Cache (2-way), 8 KB Data Cache (2-way)
- External Bus: 3.2 GB/sec
- Co-processor: FPU (Floating Point Unit), Floating Point Accumulator x 1, Floating Point Divider x 3
- Vector Units: VU0 and VU1, Floating Point Multiply Accumulator x 9, Floating Point Divider x 3
- MPEG2 Compressed Image Decoder

Graphics Processor

- Sony "Graphics Synthesizer"
- Manufacturing Process: .25 micron embedded DRAM process
- Clock Frequency: 147.456 MHz
- Embedded Memory: 4MB eDRAM
- Embedded Memory Bus Bandwidth: 48 GB/sec
- Simultaneous Textures: 0
- Rendering Functions: Texture Mapping, Bump Mapping, Fogging, Alpha Blending, Bi- and Tri-Linear Filtering, MIP Mapping, Anti-aliasing, Multi-pass Rendering

Audio Processor: Sony "SPU2+CPU"

- Simultaneous Voices: 48
- Sampling Frequency: 48 KHz
- 2MB Audio Memory
- 3D Audio: Yes

Main Memory

- 32 MB Direct Rambus (Direct RDRAM)

Disc Drive

- 24x CD-ROM
- 4x DVD-ROM
- Storage Capacity: 4.7GB
- DVD movie playback: Yes
- CD music playback: Yes

Miscellaneous

- 2 Controller Ports
- 2 Memory Card Slots
- Analog AV Output: Composite, S-video, Component
- Audio Output: Digital Optical Out for Dolby Digital and DTS
- IEEE1394 iLINK
- Universal Serial Bus (USB) x 2
- 36.8688 MHz or 36.854 MHz (Selectable) I/O Processor (32-bit PlayStation CPU) with 2MB IOP Memory
- Broadband Enabled: PS2 Network Adaptor (add-on)
- Modem Enabled: PS2 Network Adaptor (add-on)
- 40 GB Hard Drive (add-on)
- Vertical and horizontal stands (sold separately)
- Hypnic blue light

Weight and Dimensions

- Weight: 5 lbs., 5 oz.
- System Dimensions: 3" (H) x 12" (W) x 7" (D)

Price: \$299.99

PS2 HARDWARE

Buy this system if... you like sports games, racing games, RPGs, action games, and adventure games. Basically, the PlayStation 2 is the system to get if you want the largest selection of next-generation games around and don't want to be pigeonholed into any particular genre or kind of game. It has strong first-party support (three of the 10 games in our list are from SCEA), its third-party support is currently unmatched, and it has games geared toward both mature and younger gamers. Plus, with its already massive user base, you can rest assured that it'll be around for four or five years. The PS2 is also the only system that lets you play DVDs right out of the box.



- 1 Disc Tray**
Place the DVD or CD of your choice in this automatic tray.
- 2 Standby/Reset Button**
Press button lightly to restart PS2. Press longer to put system on standby.
- 3 Eject Button**
Press to open tray.
- 4 Two Memory Card Slots**
Memory Card slots for saving game info.
- 5 Two Dual Analog Controller Ports**
Input slots for controller devices.
- 6 Two USB Ports**
An input for USB compatible devices, such as a mouse, camera, keyboard, joystick, and steering wheels.
- 7 S400 iLINK Connector**
Connects multiple PS2s to enable multi-play beyond four players in some games.
- 8 Main Power Switch**
The hard power switch.
- 9 AC In**
The slot for connecting the power cable.
- 10 AV Multi Out**
A slot for connecting the audio/video cable to the TV.
- 11 Digital Out (Optical)**
Used primarily for connecting to an audio system for digital sound, including Dolby Digital 5.1 and DTS surround sound for use with DVD movies and some games.
- 12 Expansion Bay**
This large bay fits the HDD (Hard Disc Drive).
- 13 Hard Disc Drive (HDD)**
The HDD fits into the Expansion Bay at the back of the PS2. In future games, it will enable storage of data for larger games, faster load times, and downloading of additional game data. (Japanese version shown)
- 14 Network Adaptor**
The Network Adaptor fits onto the back of the HDD. This additional peripheral enables online network play for either a 56k analog connection or Ethernet broadband connection.
- 15 Memory Card**
The standard issue PS2 Memory Card holds 8 MBs of data, and contains MagicGate technology to protect and encrypt online data.
- 16 Multitap**
The black PS2 Multitap enables up to four players (five if using the second port on the system) to vie in a game simultaneously.



THE CONTROLLER



The **Dual Shock 2 controller** proves that if it isn't broke, there's no reason to fix it. Sony's revised and enhanced controller enjoyed a couple of years of success with the original PlayStation before solidifying its status as the company's design for the long haul. The comfortable grip suits almost any pair of hands, and the twin analog sticks have proven more and more versatile as developers came up with new ways to use them.

Of course, Sony didn't keep things completely static with the transition to PlayStation 2. Aside from the snappy black finish, the Dual Shock 2 also sports eight pressure-sensitive buttons (two sets of four, used for everything from *GT3*'s variable acceleration to *Solid Snake*'s quick-draw), and the redesigned analog sticks have a little more resistance for added precision. From size to specs to the tried-and-true feel of it, this is the all-terrain vehicle of console control pads.



Tony Hawk's Pro Skater 3



Dave Zelo



USB and LINK ports

PS2 OUTLOOK

By the time this issue is made available to the public, Sony will have likely released its Network Adapter and Hard Disc Drive add-ons for PlayStation 2. With these two tools, PS2 owners will have the ability to enter into the online world of games and multimedia. Initially, online games will be few and far between, with *Tony Hawk's Pro Skater 3* being the first of the truly mass-market titles to ship with online capabilities, but you can expect this aspect of the system to become more and more important as we move into 2002 and beyond.

With the Network Adapter and HDD, the possibilities of the PS2 are endless. Gamers can expect an increase in online compatible games, others meant to be played completely online, like the massively multiplayer online games that are now popular on the PC, and even games that are played in an episodic nature like weekly television shows. Plus, by using both the Network Adapter and HDD in conjunction, it'll be possible to update games and not force the user to pay full price for the same game with some enhancements. This could be perfect for sports games where a mid-season update with new rosters and player stats would be really appealing.

In addition to playing games online, the prospects of Internet connectivity may also grow to include downloadable movies and music, plus everything else that's standard with an online connection, including Web browsing, e-mail, and so on. Sony already has made major partnerships with companies such as America Online and Macromedia, so you know that this isn't something that it'll ignore.

Beyond just the Internet connectivity, the PS2's breadth of expansion ports allow for even more possibilities with the console. With the USB ports, it's possible to connect other peripherals to the system, including a mouse and keyboard or even a digital camera, which can then be used to do things like enable gamers to scan and import their own faces or pictures into games. The USB and LINK ports can also be used to connect multiple PS2s to each other for LAN-based gaming, and while this hasn't yet been used to its fullest potential, you can expect it to become more popular as companies begin to make more online titles.

It's also worth noting that the PS2 already has a massive worldwide installed base, which means that it more than likely will stick around for the long run. Software companies simply cannot ignore a user base that's already in the tens of millions.

SPECS

Controller

- Eightway directional pad (pressure sensitive)
- Four pressure-sensitive shoulder buttons
- Two analog sticks (with button function)
- Four pressure-sensitive face buttons
- Digital Select and Start button
- Rumble feature
- 7.5 foot cord

PS2

Pros

- Backwards compatibility with majority of original PlayStation software.
- \$1 sports system around.
- Massive, well-rounded software library.
- Plays DVD movies out of the box.
- HDD/network adapter available for online connectivity.

Cons

- PS2 has only two controller ports.
- HDD/network adapter add-ons add up.
- Jaggies! Jaggies! Flicker Flicker!
- What's a "disk read error"?

Genre Breakdown



- 1: Action - 2: Adventure - 3: Fighting - 4: Other - 5: Platform - 6: Puzzle - 7: Racing - 8: RPG - 9: Simulation - 10: Sports - 11: Strategy - 12: Wrestling



TOP 10 PS2 GAMES

of the holiday season >>>

It may sound silly, but even with all of the excitement of Nintendo's GameCube and Microsoft's Xbox filling everyone's heads with happy energy, owning a PlayStation 2 still makes so much sense. When we look at the sheer excellence of the system's lineup this season, we are surprised that these games are out in only the first year of the console's lifespan.

This season, the choices are so wide-ranging and attractive that it's almost impossible to make the wrong decision on PlayStation 2. Even the Xbox and the GameCube editors will agree with us in saying that this is the year of Sony's PS2. Action fan? *Devil May Cry* or *Grand Theft Auto III* should fit the bill. Sports maniac? EA's ridiculously good *Madden NFL 2002*, *FIFA 2002*, *NCAA Football 2002*, or *NHL 2002* are all worth their weight in scoobies. RPG fan? *Baldur's Gate: Dark Alliance* or *Final Fantasy X* (due in early 2002) should do it. Racing

fanatic? We have three words for you: *Gran Turismo 3*. Platform nut? Naughty Dog's *Jak and Daxter: The Precursor Legacy* is rivetingly addictive, deep and enjoyable. Or if you love the old-school stuff, get *Klonoa 2: Adventure Lunatea's Veil*, *Silent Hill 2*, *Metal Gear Solid 2: Sons of Liberty*, and *Soul Reaver 2* should be more than enough. They're all triple-A titles.

Every one of these games, plus a second-string lineup three to four games deep in every genre, makes the PlayStation 2's roster unbeatable. Developers have figured out how to beat the console's initial obstacles with clever programming, fashioning allies and flicker-free code, and get down to creating original titles and sequels that best their predecessors. Yeah, sounds like the stuff of a gooey fanboy dreamer, but the games speak for themselves, and they're remarkable.

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DEVIL MAY CRY ::

Publisher: Capcom | Developer: Capcom | Genre: Action | Release Date: 10/17/2001 | Street Price: \$49.99 | ESRB Rating: M

Capcom's arcade origins have shone through again, and this in the most surprising of ways. *Devil May Cry*, never ever played as a coin-op game and envisioned by Shoji Mikami of *Resident Evil* fame, however, merges classic screams of arcade action with stunning control and single-player innovation. The level of pure action is reminiscent of the best action-arcade games ever, but presented entirely in a new way. With stunning machine graphics running at 60 fps, and a likeable character who embodies the word "cool," *Devil May Cry* is an evolution of *Resident Evil*, but takes Capcom's latest and greatest, *Onimusha*, and bests it by miles. The fixed camera angles, borrowed from *Resident Evil* aren't even noticeable, and combined with the auto-targeting, and an absolutely kick-ass combination system, *Devil May Cry* is one of the year's best, if not the best game of the year, on any system.



GRAND THEFT AUTO III ::

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Never big fans of the *Grand Theft Auto* series before, we here at IGN have definitely made a 180-degree turn when we first saw and played *Grand Theft Auto III*. DMA's ideas have always been great, but the delivery was simply flawed. Not so in *GTA3*. DMA has carried over the hilarious one-liners, dark humor, and action-packed mayhem brilliantly into the 3D world, adding more of every element from the first games, and creating totally new challenges, control, camera perspectives, and more. The gameplay can be described in turns as a hybrid action/racing game with RPG elements to a mammoth colony of mini-games including racing, shooting, and adventure aspects. However one looks at *GTA3*, it's a huge, intense, long-lasting game that takes your lead character from the humble beginnings as a lowly thug to a "Made Man" in the Mafia. It's violent and dark at times, but it's brilliant.



GRAND TURISMO 3 A-SPEC ::

Publisher: Sony Computer Entertainment America | Developer: Polyphony Digital | Genre: Racing | Release Date: 07/10/2001 | Street Price: \$49.99 | ESRB Rating: E

Even though *GT3* has been out since July, Polyphony Digital's masterpiece still stands as the best racing game available for PS2, or any other console for that matter. Thus it's a perfect game to get for a racing fan for the holidays, assuming that he or she doesn't already own it. *GT3* features state-of-the-art graphics, more than 120 licensed cars from manufacturers such as Dodge, Honda, Nissan, Toyota, Ford, Mercedes-Benz, and Chevrolet, and enough gameplay modes and races to keep one busy for literally hundreds of hours. And do you want to know what's the best part? The amazing graphics, massive car list, and different game modes are just a small fraction of what makes this game so great. *GT3*'s best feature is an astonishingly accurate physics model that helps make it the ultimate driving simulator. If you only have room for one driving game in your library, it should be *GT3*.



ICO ::

Publisher: Sony Computer Entertainment America | Developer: Sony Computer Entertainment Inc. | Genre: Adventure | Release Date: 09/18/2001 | Street Price: \$49.99 | ESRB Rating: T

Ico has almost come out of nowhere to become one of the best adventure games of the year. If you're looking for a pure adventure with more of an emphasis on atmosphere, storyline and puzzles than combat, then look no further than this wonder from Sony. It tells a story of a young boy, named Ico, who is locked away into an ethereal castle and must try and escape his surroundings while also helping out a scared girl he encounters who seems to be in a similar predicament. Through the use of ultra-fine character animation, wondrous lighting, and atmospheric sound, *Ico* thrusts players into a magical world that they'll feel truly exists. Since it doesn't rely on the much combat – the fighting in the game consists primarily of swinging a stick or sword at these shadow beasts – and instead focuses on puzzle solving, it's also a game that can be enjoyed by gamers of all ages.



JAK AND DAXTER: THE PRECURSOR LEGACY ::

Publisher: Sony Computer Entertainment America | Developer: Naughty Dog | Genre: Platform | Release Date: 12/11/2001 | Street Price: \$49.99 | ESRB Rating: E

Jak and Daxter is a strange, wonderful game that demonstrates that Naughty Dog is truly capable of surpassing its Crash Bandicoot origins. A seamless, load time free, action/adventure game starring two likeable characters, Jak and his morphed friend Daxter, the game invites players to delve into a stunning 3D universe unlike any they've seen before. While players are put on a task to collect items, one never feels forced into the goals, thanks to the fluid gameplay and never-redundant obstacles. If the spot on control and Disney-esque animation don't hook you in right away, the sheer size and beauty of the worlds will do it. Players hop, jump, and collect, but they also swim, ride hovercrafts, and crazy flying birds called Flut-Fluts, and meet a village of amusing characters. Totally organic and lush in its design, Naughty Dog's cleverly designed culmination of familiar gameplay elements consistently feels unique and new at its core.





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TOP 10 GAMES



★★ MADDEN NFL 2002

Publisher: EA GAMES | Developer: Tibbitts | Genre: Sports | Release Date: 08/21/2001 | Street Price: \$49.99 | ESRB Rating: E

EA Sports' latest release in its long-running, highly successful, and well-regarded NFL football franchise, Madden NFL 2002 stands as what might be its best ever. And even if one already owns Madden NFL 2001, which was released when the PlayStation 2 launched last year, it's worth picking this one up because it features a bevy of substantial improvements over last year's game above and beyond the standard updates to stats, rosters and ratings. The game has been improved on just about every single level. For one, the passing game has been finely tuned and offers more realistic play that requires the player to be more precise in the timing of the passes because of the improvements in defensive back artificial intelligence. There are also a ton of new character animations, the player movement is much more fluid, and there are more gameplay features than any other sports fan could ever want.



★★ METAL GEAR SOLID 2: SONS OF LIBERTY

Publisher: Konami | Developer: Konami JPN West | Genre: Adventure | Release Date: 11/13/2001 | Street Price: \$49.99 | ESRB Rating: M

Hero? Soldier? Cloned-off killer? Whatever questions surround special agent Solid Snake's identity this season, one thing is clear: he's the hottest ticket in games. MGS2 has been the most anticipated title among gamers for more than a year, and for good reason: Director Hideo Kojima's vision of stealthy espionage action and unrelenting cinematic impact has been brilliantly realized on PS2. The experience of watching this game is equaled only by the experience of playing it—it's the smooth synthesis of movie and game that's proven as hard for so many to achieve. There is probably not a more convincing representation of reality in any game. Not necessarily because the game looks real, but because the direction, effects, and design come together to create something that feels real. And the reality of finding yourself in Snake's role—saving the world from nuclear Armageddon, anyone?—is as cool a feeling as you could ask for.



★★ SILENT HILL 2

Publisher: Konami | Developer: Konami TYD | Genre: Adventure | Release Date: 09/28/2001 | Street Price: \$49.99 | ESRB Rating: M

Nothing but horror. That is what the creators of Silent Hill 2 wanted to make, and they have succeeded. It's hard to think of an experience, in games or other media, that touches so many instinctive fears—the dark, the unfamiliar, the inhuman, the all-too-human. Mixed in with the awful visions of the Other in this game are equally unsettling reflections of ourselves, or at least things that are just enough like us to horrify. Silent Hill 2 may seem much like its predecessor—hapless fellow returns to town and finds evil there. The new game is a far more complex piece of work, though, in its Byzantine story and murky psychological dimensions, and the PS2 allows a comparable depth of shading in its visuals.

This is not a game for the young, or those who might resist its difficult controls, but those seeking a work of horror will find none better.



★★ SSX TRICKY

Publisher: Electronic Arts | Developer: EA Canada | Genre: Sports | Release Date: 11/10/2001 | Street Price: \$49.99 | ESRB Rating: E

When the PlayStation 2 launched in the United States on October 26, 2001, the critics agreed that the system's best launch game was SSX. It was received so well, in fact, that the developers over at EA Canada wanted to release a special edition of the game on DVD format that was to be called SSX: DVD and feature some major tweaks and enhancements. The list of minor tweaks and enhancements kept growing and growing, though, and the title moved from being a simple special edition to what's considered to be a full-blown sequel. Now called SSX: Tricky, the game features completely new tracks and boards to go along with the old characters and completely revamped and retooled tracks from the original. If you already own and love the original, Tricky is still worth picking up. And if you don't own the original and are looking for the best snowboarding game around, this is it.



★★ TONY HAWK'S PRO SKATER 3

Publisher: Activision | Developer: Neversoft | Genre: Sports | Release Date: 10/26/2001 | Street Price: \$49.95 | ESRB Rating: T

This may become the biggest seller of the year, and no shame if it does. Neversoft brings skateboarding action into the next generation with massive new levels, beautiful graphics, and painful attention to detail. This is the game Tony Hawk has always been, and some might be wary of what could be more of the same, but rest assured that there is far more to do, see, and skate than there ever has in Tony Hawk's past. There are more tricks, naturally, and the Havert maneuver closes the gap between vert and street. In theory, the quick-fingered can combo the length of any level. The amount of space in places like Los Angeles and Tokyo makes that a tall order, though, and interactive stages give you more to do than just grind and manual—you can even start your own earthquake. If you like, Tony Hawk still owns this genre, and that's not likely to change any time soon.



1. Memento; 2. Xenosaga; 3. TimeSplitters 2; 4. Final Fantasy X; 5. Stuntman; 6. Virtua Fighter 4; 7. Soul Calibur 2; 8. Tekken 4; 9. State of Emergency

The PlayStation 2 is having one of the most amazing holidays any game system has ever seen, but the world doesn't end with the turn of the year. The year 2002 promises another wave of amazing titles in all different genres, as the industry's best developers log even more time and talent on Sony's black boxends. These are some of the games that we know will be turning heads next year, even if we're not sure exactly when they're coming or where they'll be coming to. Don't make too many long-term plans around these names, but do make sure you know them.

HOT PICKS FOR 2002

coming to playstation 2

FINAL FANTASY X

Publisher: Square EA | Developer: Squaresoft | Genre: RPG | Release Date: 01/2002 | Street Price: TBA | ESRB Rating: T

If it were to be released this year, then Square's latest installment in its heralded Final Fantasy series, Final Fantasy X, would be a shoe-in for our list of the top 10 must-have games for the holidays for PlayStation 2. As is, the game will be released in January 2002 and will instead be an early favorite for the 2002 game of the year for PS2. FFX is shaping up to be one of the most memorable games in the series and considering that this is the best RPG franchise in the world in the minds of many gamers, this isn't going to be a title to pass up.

FINAL FANTASY XI

Publisher: Square EA | Developer: Squaresoft | Genre: MMORPG | Release Date: 03/2002 | Street Price: TBA | ESRB Rating: T

Along with the release of Final Fantasy X, fans of Square and RPGs in general will also have to keep an eye out for the company's next release in the series, the massively multi-player online RPG, Final Fantasy XI. FFXI will be the series' first completely online game and it will enable gamers from across the world to play with and against each other in a fully realized Final Fantasy world. If online gaming on consoles is to flourish, this game could play a key role in making it happen. Eager fans can expect this one to come out in the early half of 2002.

MAXIMO: GHOSTS TO GLORY

Publisher: Capcom | Developer: Capcom | Genre: Action | Release Date: 01/2002 | Street Price: \$49.99 | ESRB Rating: T

With the remarkable Devil May Cry, you'd think that Capcom would wait just a little bit before delivering another blockbuster. But that's just not the case. Maximo, developed by the in-house Capcom Digital Entertainment team, is a revelation in 3D gameplay that feels like the best of 2D platform/action games. With dozens of interactive levels, deep gameplay, and a character who loses his clothes when he's low on life, this will be one of those titles that you won't be able to pass up in the early part of 2002. It's like eating taffy or chocolate for the first time—refreshing, addictive, and happy-making. Yes, happy-making, a word we created just for Maximo.

SOUL CALIBUR 2

Publisher: Namco | Developer: Namco | Genre: Fighting | Release Date: TBA | Street Price: TBA | ESRB Rating: T

Soul Calibur, by general assent, is the greatest 3D fighting game ever made and is still considered by many to be the best game that was ever released for Sega's Dreamcast. That leaves the hardest of all possible legions for its upcoming sequel to live up to. It's still nothing more than speculation and screenshots at this point, but hopes remain high considering what Namco is capable of. Fan-favorite characters like Sophitia, Astoroth, Taki, and Nightmare are on their way back to the fabled state of history, making this a highly-anticipated game for fans of the original and those that just love 3D fighters. It's also coming to both Xbox and GameCube, so it'll be interesting to see how well the three versions compare.

STATE OF EMERGENCY

Publisher: Rockstar Games | Developer: Vix | Genre: Action | Release Date: 01/2002 | Street Price: \$49.99 | ESRB Rating: M

Due for release in the first half of 2002, Rockstar Games' State of Emergency is best described as an urban riot simulator set in a near future world. You take part in a riot against the oppressive, and fictional, American Trade Organization (ATO), and your objective is to destroy things and help wreak havoc to weaken them and eventually take them down. With more than 100 characters on screen at once and a multitude of objects and weapons at your disposal, including shotguns, bazookas, rocket launchers and machine guns, plus some silky smooth graphics, State of Emergency will be one of the year's best action games for PlayStation 2.

STUNTMAN

Publisher: InnoGames | Developer: Reflections | Genre: Action | Release Date: Q2 2002 | Street Price: TBA | ESRB Rating: T

There's nothing quite like a great smash-'em-up racing game, and the kings of the Driver series are back with a whole new angle on breaking stuff with your car. In Reflections' Stuntman, players take on the role of a ground-level movie stuntman who works his way up as a car-driving specialist for C, B, and finally A-quality movies. The gameplay is like Driver, only highly specialized, and involving serious repercussions. What makes this game so inviting is the pure variety of gameplay, vehicles, and landscapes, and the incredibly complex and versatile physics engine. Stuntman is an extreme driving fanatic's dream come true and if it lives

up to our expectations, which we're pretty confident that it'll do, it could be among the best games of 2002.

TEKKEN 4

Publisher: Namco | Developer: Namco | Genre: Fighting | Release Date: TBA | Street Price: TBA | ESRB Rating: T

Namco promises the fight of your life in this one—a bold claim in the packed fighting market of 2002, which will see new releases in at least three different major 3D fighting franchises. Tekken has proven an enduring name, though, and the fourth Iron Fist Tournament features far more new game elements than any other. Movement in every direction is possible, and walled arenas exert subtle pressures on each fight. New characters bring new styles of play, too, from boxer Steve Fox to Vale Tudo grappler Craig Marduk. It's the most popular 3D fighting game franchise in the US and there's no reason to think that this will change any time soon.

TIMESPLITTERS 2

Publisher: Eidos Interactive | Developer: Free Radical | Genre: Action | Release Date: Q2 2002 | Street Price: TBA | ESRB Rating: M

Although the Free Radical team was quick to create a notable first-person shooter for the PS2 launch, it wasn't quite as good as we had all hoped, especially as a single player game. And the former team that helped create GoldenEye knew it, which is why TimeSplitters 2 is going to be everything (and more) that its predecessor wasn't. Free Radical is in the midst of creating a deep single-player experience with multiple objectives, an even better four-player mode, and an even more robust level editor. It's hard to resist, too, because everything is running at a rock-solid 60 frames per second. Believe us, this one has unlimited potential.

VIRTUA FIGHTER 4

Publisher: Sega | Developer: AM2 of CB | Genre: Fighting | Release Date: TBA | Street Price: TBA | ESRB Rating: T

One of the biggest bombshells in videogame history landed when we learned that Sega's flagship fighter was coming to PlayStation 2. It's running on arcades on the Naomi 2, but AM2's console of choice is now made by Sony. VF4's creators have promised a perfect arcade to home conversion, and longtime fans should enjoy the shift towards a VF2-esque style of play. Meanwhile, the graphics can't let anyone complain—for now, it's easily the best-looking fighter around. It definitely has a lot of competition in the fighting genre, on PlayStation 2 and competing next-generation platforms, but Sega's fighter can't be overlooked.

XENOSAGA

Publisher: Namco | Developer: Monolith Soft | Genre: RPG | Release Date: TBA | Street Price: TBA | ESRB Rating: TBA

If you remember Square's Xenogears, or even if you don't, keep close tabs on Xenosaga, a role-playing game from the creators of that PlayStation cult hit. Headed up by director Tetsuya Takahashi and featuring many of the same talent (including ace composer Yasanori Mitsuda, conducting the London Philharmonic Orchestra), this space opera features an epic story and everyone's favorite lots of giant robots. Real-time 3D graphics bring original anime-style character designs to life with remarkable fidelity. Final Fantasy X will probably garner the most mainstream attention, but we're almost certain that Xenosaga will be able to carve a very powerful niche of its own in the 2002 RPG landscape.

Even after such an incredible year in 2001, Sony's red-hot PlayStation 2 has much more to offer. With more than a one year lead over the GameCube or Xbox, you can be sure that developers know all the ins and outs of programming for the PS2, and 2002 is destined to be one of the best years for PlayStation 2 games so far. Make sure to follow up on <http://ps2.ign.com> for constant updates to all these games, tons of high-resolution screenshots, movies, and more. Oh, and there may also be videos of Dave Z dancing to Britney Spears music. Try and find them, if you dare.

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SPECS

CPU: 128-bit Hitachi SH4 RISC CPU

- Operating frequency of 200 MHz at 360 MIPS/1.4MIPS

Graphics Processor

- NEC PowerVR Second Generation
- 8MB video memory
- Rendering functions: Anti aliasing, Alpha Blending, Environment Mapping, MIP Mapping, Bilinear Filtering

Audio Processor

- Yamaha Super Intelligent Sound Processor
- Simultaneous voices: 64
- Sampling frequency: 48 KHz
- 3D Audio: Yes
- 2MB sound memory

Operating Systems

- Customized Sega OS
- NADMI based hardware
- Designed to run a Microsoft Windows CE for titles that utilize the Windows OS.

Main Memory

- 16MB main memory (26MB total system memory)

Disc Drive

- 12x (maximum) proprietary Yamaha GD-RDM (Gigabyte Disc)
- Storage Capacity: 1GB
- DVD movie playback: No
- CD music playback: Yes

Miscellaneous

- 4 Controller Ports
- 2 Memory Card Slots Per Controller
- Built-in 56Kbps Modem - Upgradeable to Broadband Adapter (sold separately)
- Analog AV Output: Composite, S-Video, VGA Support (addon required)
- Sens! Port
- Liquid-crystal display PDA (addon) - used for game data backup, data exchange, and minigames.
- Built-in 56Kbps Modem - upgradeable to Broadband Adapter (sold separately).
- Also included: modular telephone cord, Dream Passport Internet access software.

Weight and Dimensions

- Weight: 4lbs., 6 oz.
- Dimensions: 3.1" (H) x 7.5" (W) x 7.7" (D)

Price: \$79.99

DREAMCAST HARDWARE

Buy this system if... you are on a budget. At its reduced price, the Dreamcast is a steal considering the wealth of awesome games available for the system. Although ports of Dreamcast titles and original titles from Sega are appearing on other consoles, sometimes it's best to play the games on the system they were originally meant for. It might be hard to swallow the fact that you're going to buy a system knowing full well that it's better days are at an end, but if you enjoy videogames at all, you should definitely own a Dreamcast... it's that simple.



- Power Button**
Press this button to power up or down the Dreamcast.
- Open Lid Button**
Press to open lid and place GD-RDM or CD of your choice.
- Vents**
Multiple ventilation holes to cool the system.
- Four Controller Ports**
Input slots for controller devices.
- AC In**
The slot for connecting the power cable.
- AV Multi Out**
A slot for connecting the audio/video cable to the TV.
- Serial Port**
Used for miscellaneous connections to various Dreamcast compatible devices (i.e. Neo Geo Pocket Color, DC Karaoke Machine, etc).
- Modem Line Port**
Used to connect modular telephone cord to owner's phone line for online browsing and gameplay.
- Back Vent**
Keeps system from overheating.
- Visual Memory Unit (VMU)**
A necessary item in order to save and trade game data. The VMU features its own LCD screen and controller buttons for the ability to play minigames downloaded from selected Dreamcast titles. The LCD exchange, or transfer screen, is also used for several Sega Sports titles.
- Dreamcast Broadband Adapter**
Sure, surfing the Internet and playing games online with the standard Dreamcast Modem is pretty nice, but why drive a Honda when you can drive a Ferrari? Offering full 10BASE-T and 100BASE-TX compatibility, the Broadband Adapter works with almost all broadband ISPs. (Note: Does not support all Dreamcast online titles)
- Jump Pack**
For those that really want to get into the game, the Jump Pack delivers. Feel every explosion in Dogma Boggia or every whiplash inducing table in NFL 2K2.



THE CONTROLLER ::

Slightly based on the Sega Saturn analog controller, the four face buttons (A, B, X, and Y) on the Dreamcast controller are positioned well, but the triggers are a bit low and may cause some cramping while playing racers or other games that use the triggers frequently. A big plus is the digital pad. While the majority of games today use the analog controls, you can't play a fighting game without a good digital pad. The Dreamcast D-pad is one of the best in terms of comfort and size when compared with controllers on other systems.

SPECS

Controller

- Eight-way directional pad
- Two analog triggers
- Analog thumb stick
- Four digital buttons
- Two slots for VMUs or Jump Pack (rumble)
- Groove for routing the cable vertically
- 6.75-foot cord
- Controllers ship in multiple colors (red, blue, green, yellow, black)

DREAMCAST

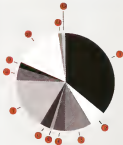
Pros

- Excellent and extensive library of software.
- Established online gameplay network.
- Available for \$79.99 (cheaper than PlayStation One).
- Many Sega titles are exclusive to the Dreamcast (well, at least for now).

Cons

- Software support will end March 2002.
- Online gameplay only available for a few select titles.
- The system fan is noisy.

Game Breakdown



- 1: Action - 2: Adventure - 3: Fighting -
4: Other - 5: Platform - 6: Puzzle -
7: Racing - 8: RPG - 9: Simulation -
10: Sports - 11: Strategy - 12: Wrestling



Samba De Amigo Maracas



Face It Anthony, DC is dead...



...but it's cheap, cheap, cheap.

DREAMCAST OUTLOOK ::

Okay, stop laughing. Yes, there's not much of a future for Sega's white wonder, especially since software support is basically gone after March 2002. Does that mean the Dreamcast is not worth owning? Absolutely not! Consider this: for \$79.99 you get the base system with controller and all the necessary accessories. The Dreamcast library contains some of the most unique and innovative videogame titles for any system, and a great majority of the titles are very inexpensive — you can find many awesome Sega titles like *Crazy Taxi* for under 20 dollars. Sure, you can play a half-decent version of *Crazy Taxi* on the PS2, but can you go online and enjoy some of the best sports titles in the videogame business today? Not yet, at least. With that in mind, with Sega's new multi-platform strategy, you will see new Sega titles on other systems... but not *Skies Of Arcadia*, not *Ooga Booga*, and certainly not *Samba De Amigo*.

Speaking of online, Sega's online gaming provider, SegaNet, has been dissolved. But the well-known Internet provider Earthlink has stepped up to the plate and will take care of Dreamcast's future online gaming needs. This will ensure that even new Dreamcast owners are able to enjoy the wonderful online features that most of the Sega Sports titles offer. Furthermore, join the online console RPG revolution with Yuji Naka's *Phantasy Star Online*, that has won international awards all over the world. Even if you don't feel like gaming online, you can browse away on the Internet as the Dreamcast is the only console currently with online capabilities. While the software line-up looks bleak for the Dreamcast after this Christmas, NHL 2K2 hockey is still on track to be released early next year and there are very strong indications that Sega is planning some sort of special "farewell" Dreamcast title that will really knock your socks off. So, what does the future hold in store for Dreamcast owners? You'll gain access to some of the best looking and playing videogames, have the only system that you can play online games with, and most of all, you'll be saving a lot of money. So if it's a lean year for you this Christmas, support our Sega and get your Dreamcast today!



TOP 10 DC GAMES

of the holiday season >>>

Despite what many think, there are still a good number of titles for the Dreamcast this holiday season. Granted, there are not a whole lot of them, especially when you compare it to the avalanche of PlayStation titles, but unlike the PS, all the holiday titles for the Dreamcast are definitely top-notch quality. It's sad to say this, but the technologically inferior PlayStation will probably outsell the Dreamcast this holiday season — despite the fact that the PS one is currently selling at \$99.99. When you have awesome titles like *Shenmue*, *Skies of Arcadia*, *Crazy Taxi*, *Virtual On*, *Oratorio Tangram*, *Soul Calibur*, *Virtual Tennis*, the Sega Sports line-up ... it just boggles the mind that there aren't more Dreamcast owners.

Let's also not forget that many of these titles will have online play, and that's definitely something you can't get on PS one. Unfortunately, since SegaNet is no longer providing the online gameplay service for the Dreamcast, you'll have to either go to Sega's preferred online support — Earthlink — or another ISP. What about Broadband Adapter compatibility? Unfortunately, none of the games below support the Broadband Adapter, but you'll find that this accessory is one really hard DC peripheral to find now, anyway.

The following is a list of new holiday titles that Dreamcast owners should definitely pick up because these will probably be among the last Dreamcast titles to come out ever. With the exception of *NHL 2K2* (due out in late January 2002) and *Propeller Arena* (postponed indefinitely), there's not much left, so grab what you can now!



:: BOMBERMAN ONLINE

Publisher: Sega | Developer: Hudson | Genre: Action | Release Date: 10/16/2001 | Street Price: \$39.99 | ESRB Rating: E



The father of all multiplayer games finally appears on the Dreamcast, and although this is the first and last time we'll see Bomberman on the system, Sega and Hudson are making sure it's one to be remembered. Using the visual technique known as cel-shading seen in such games as *Jut Grind Radio*, *Bomberman Online's* gameplay hasn't changed much — drop bombs and detonate opposing Bomberman to smithereens. To ensure hours and hours of gameplay fun, *Bomberman Online* comes complete with lots of stages, five exciting battle modes, a create-your-own Bomberman option, and of course, online play. By the way, we're hearing some interesting rumors that you may be able to play this game online with more than four players! For this holiday season, Dreamcast owners will have a blast. [Insert innuendo here].

:: MAT HOFFMAN'S PRO BMX

Publisher: Activision | Developer: Treyarch | Genre: Sports | Release Date: 09/12/2001 | Street Price: \$39.99 | ESRB Rating: E



The Condor takes flight on the Dreamcast, utilizing the extremely powerful engine from *Tony Hawk's Pro Skater* and taking it up a few notches, Activision delivers a solid extreme BMX action in *Mat Hoffman's Pro BMX*. Although a port of the PlayStation version, the Dreamcast game looks better than its PS brother, and controls like a charm. There are tons of variations in grinds and some death-defying stunts that will have you gasping for air. While you're at it, check out the M.O.R.S.E-like two-player mode as well as the design your own park feature. All the big names in extreme BMX sports are here including Joe "Butcher" Kowalski, Rick Thorne, Cory Nastabo, Mike "Rooftop" Escamilla, and many others. Even the Hawk himself appears in the game! So if performing a 720 Superman without the nicks, cuts, or burn of extreme BMX sounds good to you, grab some big air with *Mat Hoffman's Pro BMX*.

:: MARK OF THE WOLVES

Publisher: Agegate | Developer: SNK | Genre: Fighting | Release Date: 10/16/2001 | Street Price: \$39.99 | ESRB Rating: T



In the 2D fighting world, SNK is heralded as one of the few videogame companies that has kept this dying genre fresh and exciting. Although the company has made several awesome 2D fighting games in the past, *Mark of the Wolves* may be SNK's finest 2D fighting game ever — and that's saying a lot. Incredible 2D animation, wonderfully designed characters, and spectacular special attacks combine to deliver one of the best 2D fighting action on any system. *Mark of the Wolves* utilizes a unique defensive blocking system that rivals the complexity of any other fighting game. Combine that with a sick amount of play mechanics and you've got one 2D fighter Dreamcast owners cannot pass up. Besides, this might be the last chance for 2D fighting games to leave their mark on the Dreamcast.

:: DOGA BOOGA

Publisher: Sega | Developer: Visual Concepts | Genre: Action | Release Date: 10/16/2001 | Street Price: \$29.99 | ESRB Rating: E



Bringing in a new franchise that's not known in the mainstays of videogaming may be a tough thing to do — but for the love of all that is holy in videogames, every Dreamcast owner must own *Doga Booga*. This is one of the best multiplayer games across all platforms, and definitely the best on Dreamcast. Choose from four different Koshina tribe leaders and wage jungle warfare upon each other to gain the praise of the volcano goddess, Doga Booga. We're not talking about tiger traps here, folks — you use an assortment of spells, awaken Tiki statues to aid your battle, and take advantage of the native animals (no, not in that way) to accomplish your goals. Awesome visuals, lightning-fast gameplay (and framerate for that matter), and the best online gameplay in a Dreamcast game means you owe it to yourself to do voodoo on the Dreamcast this holiday.



PHANTASY STAR ONLINE VERSION 2 ::

Publisher: Sega | **Developer:** Sonic Team | **Genre:** RPG | **Release Date:** 09/26/2001 |
Street Price: \$39.99 (\$15.00 for 3 months to play online) | **ESRB Rating:** E

As the first MMORPG (that's massively multiplayer online role-playing game) on a home videogame console, *Phantasy Star Online* broke new ground in terms of gameplay, online connectivity, online chat functions, and visual style. *PSO Version 2* improves upon the idea by adding over 70 new unique items and weapons, a new difficulty setting, and most of all, online battle modes. *PSO* players will be able to fight each other to see who truly is the master *PSO* player (or one with no life... take your pick) and all within the safety of Sega's improved online servers. Sure, you have to pay a fee (\$15 for three months), but that small sum is well worth the gameplay experience and new online buddies you'll meet when you step down on Ragnarok once again.



SEGA BASS FISHING 2 ::

Publisher: Sega | **Developer:** Wow Entertainment | **Genre:** Sports | **Release Date:** 10/26/2001 |
Street Price: \$29.95 | **ESRB Rating:** E

Many have tried and most have failed at making digital fishing fun, but if anyone can do it, Sega can. *Sega Bass Fishing* introduced an exciting arcade feel to the sport of fishing, and *Sega Bass Fishing 2* continues the traditional while adding a lot of depth to the game. While reeling in and catching "the big one" stays true to the arcade style, prodding where to go, watching the weather, checking the water depth, and keeping track of the seasons are all simulation elements added to give the Dreamcast owner a much more realistic fishing experience. Although you really can't make the visuals too much in a fishing game, you probably won't find a finer looking and playing fishing game than *Bass Fishing 2*.



SEGA SPORTS NBA 2K2 ::

Publisher: Sega | **Developer:** Visual Concepts | **Genre:** Sports | **Release Date:** 10/26/2001 |
Street Price: \$39.99 | **ESRB Rating:** E

While the fight for football supremacy has yet to be decided, there's only one basketball game anyone needs to own. *Visual Concepts' NBA 2K* has ascended to the upper echelon of sports gaming, delivering the true excitement of basketball to videogames like no other. And don't think VC will slack off with *NBA 2K2*. Improved visuals, tons of new animations, and total revamp of the gameplay balance have made *NBA 2K2* faster and tons more fun. Players can now adjust their shot depending on how they contact the opposing defense, collision detection has been dramatically improved, and there are some great new character animations. And let's not forget the all-important online play that looks to dramatically improve over *NBA 2K1*. Advance to the next level of the game or be posterized for not owning *NBA 2K2*.



SEGA SPORTS NFL 2K2 ::

Publisher: Sega | **Developer:** Visual Concepts | **Genre:** Sports | **Release Date:** 10/26/2001 |
Street Price: \$39.99 | **ESRB Rating:** E

For the longest time, Madden reigned supreme in the realm of videogame football, only to be halted by those free thinkers over at *Visual Concepts* with their anatomically correct football players, fast arcade pace, and online play. Suddenly, there was a choice for football with enhanced animation, improved collision detection, excellent commentary, and online play. *NFL 2K2* is no longer the underdog, but a competitor to become the king of football videogames. Significant gameplay improvements in the passing and running game, smarter CPU AI, new player modes, and enhancements to the online play are just a few of the elements added to make *NFL 2K2* the best and best Dreamcast football game.



SEGA SPORTS TENNIS 2K2 ::

Publisher: Sega | **Developer:** Visual Concepts/Hitmaker | **Genre:** Sports | **Release Date:** 10/26/2001 |
Street Price: \$29.95 | **ESRB Rating:** E

Who would've thought that a video tennis game would become one of the most addictive videogames around? Well, besides *Hitmaker*—the geniuses responsible for *Virtua Tennis*—no one did, and that makes *Virtua Tennis* on the Dreamcast that much more special. Of course, now that everyone has had a taste of fast-paced tennis action, there's a lot of anticipation for the sequel. *Hitmaker* isn't worrying about that as *Tennis 2K2* looks to ace the previous version with improved visuals, faster pace, and many of the well-known names in the sport of tennis. And let's not forget the fact that you can make your own tennis player and train him or her in various mini-games to take on the world's best players. Na, you won't find Anna Kournikova here, but you can make her and train her just the way you like. Yeah, that's right.



SHENMUE 2 ::

Publisher: Sega | **Developer:** AM2 | **Genre:** Adventure | **Release Date:** 12/04/2001 |
Street Price: \$39.99 | **ESRB Rating:** T

The Dreamcast epic continues as Ryo travels to Hong Kong in pursuit of his father's murderer. As evidenced by the first *Shenmue*, Yu Suzuki knows every minute trick in developing for the Dreamcast that allows him to get the maximum output of visual splendor. This makes *Shenmue* one of the most spectacular looking titles on any platform. The mixture of 3D fighting sequences, puzzle solving, and a wonderful story intertwine to form one of the most unique and refreshing videogame experiences ever. There's always the question of whether we'll see a next generation console version of *Shenmue 2*, but why take the risk on missing out on one of the most unique Dreamcast titles to be released? Will Ryo finally face-off against his father's killer in a martial arts battle to the death? Find out this winter.





SPECS

CPU: 32-bit RISC-CPU + 8-bit CISC-CPU

- Embedded Memory: 32 Kbytes + 96 Kbytes (in CPU)
- 32-bit ARM RISC-CPU for GBA games
- 8-bit CISC-CPU for GB/GBG games

Display and Graphics

- Reflection (nonbacklit) TFT Color Liquid Crystal
- 240x160 pixels resolution
- 32,768 possible colors (513 simultaneous colors in character mode; 32,768 simultaneous colors in bitmap mode)
- Effects: Alpha Channel, Sprite Scaling and Rotating, Background Scaling and Rotating, Parallax Scrolling

Audio Processor

- Z80 Sound Processor (for GB/GBG games)
- Built-in Speaker (mono)
- Stereo Headphone Output

Main Memory

- 256 Kbytes WRAM (external of CPU)

Media Format

- Proprietary GBA and GBC cartridge ROM format
- Maximum 256 Megabit (32MB) cart

Power Source

- 2 AA Batteries
- AC Adapter (sold separately)

Miscellaneous

- Eight-way directional pad
- Four digital face buttons (A, B, Select, Start)
- Two digital L, R shoulder buttons
- Battery Life: 15 hours (AA)
- Software sleep mode to shut down system while game is in progress
- GBA Link Cable (optional) for 4-Player Link Play (GBA) and 2-Player Link Play (GBC) (sold separately)
- GameCube Link Cable for data transfer with GCN (sold separately)
- Card e-Reader for data input from printed material (sold separately)
- Various third-party add-ons available, including external lights, TV tuner, screen magnifiers, carrying cases, and more
- Ships in multiple colors (Glacier, Fuchsia, Indigo, Arctic, and more to come)

Weight and Dimensions

- Weight: 0 lbs., 5 oz
- System Dimensions: 1" (H) x 5.6" (W) x 3.2" (D)

Price: \$99.99

GBA HARDWARE

Buy this system if... you find yourself on the road a lot, or with plenty of idle time outside the house. The system is a perfect size that makes it easy to toss in a bag or in a back pocket, so it's not a hassle to get in your gaming fix beyond the television. You'll love the multiplayer aspects of this system too, because everyone gets their own view of the action. And, of course you have the ability to get into a game while sitting on the can...



1 Directional Pad

Up, down, left, right. You need to control the game somehow, right?

2 Start Button

Mostly used to pause games in progress. But it does "start" games too.

3 Select Button

Not really used much in games, but it has been used as a supplementary action button when needed.

4 A and B Buttons

The normal action buttons for every game.

5 LCD Screen

The "television" of the Game Boy Advance.

6 Speaker

Just listen...

7 Power Light

It lights up when the system is on... and turns from green to red when the batteries are almost dead.

8 L and R Buttons

Supplementary action buttons that put your index fingers to use.

9 Cartridge Slot

This is where your game goes when you want to play it. Fits GBA and GB/GBG cartridges.

10 Link Port

Connect the system to other Game Boy Advances or the GameCube through this port.

11 Peripheral Notches

These little holes secure some peripherals into place—including the GameCube to Game Boy Advance link cable.

12 Power Switch

Flip this switch to turn the power on.

13 Headphone Jack

Any pair of headphones with a 1/8" plug will work.

14 Volume Control

Turn it up, or turn it down.

15 Battery Compartment

Two AA batteries go here to power the system.



LINK CABLE PLAY

The **Game Boy Advance's** biggest strength is its ability to connect multiple players together in specific games – the original Game Boy and Game Boy Color both offered single system to system connectivity for two player competitors, but the Game Boy Advance and its specialized link cable allows for as many as four players to link up.

Nintendo has also created a way for certain games to connect systems together, even if only one player has a copy of the game.

What happens is that a small version of the game is sent from the main system to all connected systems, which then boots up the connected Game Boy Advances so that everyone can get in on the action.

Single cartridge link is usually offered as a demo version of the actual link game – like a single track in a racing game, or a basic arena in a shooter. It's a great taste of what kind of fun you can be having with your buddies, but if you want to take full advantage of the games' multiplayer features, every system needs a copy of the game.



GBA makes Kirby tumble...



Linking up to GameCube



Card e-Reader

GAME BOY ADVANCE OUTLOOK

The **Game Boy Advance** is one of the least expensive gaming investments in the industry, and Nintendo is going to make sure that investment is taken as far as it can go. One of Nintendo's big future plans with the Game Boy Advance is to integrate the system with its big console brother. Through the use of a specialized cable, developers will be able to link the GBA with the GameCube, incorporating handheld and console games in a way that's never been done before.

Nintendo has at least two games in the works to put this connectivity to use. The upcoming Kirby's Tilt 'n' Tumble for GameCube, for example, will utilize a special Game Boy Advance cartridge with motion sensor. When the GBA is plugged into the GameCube, players will be able to maneuver Kirby in a 3D environment by rocking the handheld system back and forth, moving the pink bell around like a marble. And in *Animal Forest +*, the GameCube version will send a miniature program to the Game Boy Advance's internal memory through the cable, allowing players to take a hidden island with them and inhabit it as they would on the GameCube game. When the players return to their GameCube system, everything that they've done can be sent back to the console game and incorporated into the world. Players can even create custom icons on the handheld and send them back to the GameCube game as signs, wallpaper, and clothing.

Other companies will put the link feature to use as well. Sega's own Game Boy Advance version of *Sonic the Hedgehog* will interact with the GameCube *Sonic Adventure 2* through the cable, transferring specific character data from one version to the other. This will unlock hidden mini-games that, theoretically, only owners of the GBA title can play.

The Pokémon trading card game, while not as popular as it once was, is still going strong, and Nintendo will incorporate a new barcode onto the cards' edges in new editions of the game. These barcodes can then be scanned with a device called the Pokémon E-Card reader – this is a unit that plugs into the GBA system, and when the proper Pokémon trading cards are scanned into the device, the creatures' stats and info will be displayed on the GBA screen. Card combinations will unlock hidden mini-games, encouraging players to trade their collection with friends in order to open up the tucked away goodies.

SPECS

Craig Harris, IGNpocket EIC

- Just one guy
- New improved contact lenses (no more bulky glasses)
- Over 72 GBA units owned (and no, you can't borrow one)
- Now with more crankiness
- Two analog joys, two analog arms, one analog ferret
- One port for eatin', one port for pooper'
- Includes free pickles

GBA

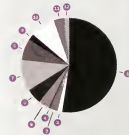
Pros

- Portable – takes it anywhere.
- Long battery life.
- Less expensive than console systems.
- Plenty of game support from hundreds of companies.
- Four-player link capability.
- Can play every single game made for previous Game Boy systems.

Cons

- Technically weaker than console systems.
- Difficult to play in low-light conditions.
- Not all cartridges have battery save.
- A little uncomfortable for players with large hands.
- Third party games can be pricey.

Genre Breakdown



- 1: Action - 2: Adventure - 3: Fighting -
4: Other - 5: Platform - 6: Puzzle -
7: Racing - 8: RPG - 9: Simulation -
10: Sports - 11: Strategy - 12: Wrestling



TOP 10 GBA GAMES

of the holiday season >>>

The **Game Boy Advance** was released on June 11th, 2001. By the time the holidays roll around, there will be more than 70 games out on shelves. That's an incredibly overwhelming number of games to sort through, especially for folks buying a Game Boy system for the first time.

Keep in mind that many companies use well-known licenses to sell Game Boy Advance games. It's a tactic that's been employed most prominently on the Game Boy Color, often because of the high expense of manufacturing the game cartridges. Since some companies are afraid that an original product might not sell as many copies as one with a brand everyone's familiar with, it's just common sense that you're going to find more "branded" games than original ones. Just remember that even though the box has a Saturday-morning cartoon character on the cover doesn't mean

that the game itself is any good.

In fact, the Game Boy Advance's track record in the original title category is surprisingly high — publishers who release a GBA title that doesn't depend on a "name" are usually confident that they've got a decent game on their hands. But again, this isn't a sure thing, so it's good to investigate a game before making the 30-40 dollar investment.

So, even though we can't break down every single one of the Game Boy Advance's 70+ games in its library, we've made sure that you know of some of the games that really should be added to your holiday shopping list. These are ten "sure things" in the Game Boy Advance's library — top-notch titles that will almost guarantee a happy gamer if one or more show up in their stockings.



ADVANCE WARS ::

Publisher: Nintendo | Developer: Intelligent Systems | Genre: Strategy | Release Date: 09/10/2001 | Street Price: \$29.99 | ESRB Rating: E

Since this list is by alphabetic order, it's just a coincidence that *Advance Wars* is on top... but after playing through this game, we have to say that it's quite possibly the Game Boy Advance's finest hour. It's not an action title, though. Instead, it's a strategy game where players (computer opponents included) take turns moving their troops across the land, attacking opposing forces to conquer the land. This game is a prime example of what every Game Boy Advance should have. It allows for four players to link up and battle it out, with or without each system having a copy of the game. It even features a cartography tool so that gamers can create maps and trade them with friends who have their own *Advance Wars* cartridge. This game has endless gameplay possibilities, and gamers will be playing this one for months.



CASTLEVANIA: CIRCLE OF THE MOON ::

Publisher: Konami | Developer: KCEK | Genre: Adventure | Release Date: 06/11/01 | Street Price: \$39.99 | ESRB Rating: E

The *Castlevania* franchise has always been a popular series on every system it's been released on, from the original NES to the Nintendo 64 and PlayStation. The latest incarnation of the vampire slayer line was released with the launch of the Game Boy Advance, and it's one of the best titles in the series. You'll have to harness the hero's abilities to explore the massive castle as well as defeat the many different evil creatures hiding within. The game is admittedly a bit on the dark side visually to fit the style, which makes it hard to see some of the awesome graphic effects on the portable's LCD screen. *Castlevania* may seem more appropriate as a Halloween treat, but gamers will love it any time of the year.



DOOM ::

Publisher: Activision | Developer: David A. Palmer Productions | Genre: Action | Release Date: 10/24/2001 | Street Price: \$39.99 | ESRB Rating: T

The game that arguably popularized the whole first-person shooter genre has returned after more than a half-decade, this time in portable form for the Game Boy Advance. *DOOM* is the original fragfest, beginning its life on the PC and moving down the line for most game systems, and now it can finally be taken with you wherever you go. The Game Boy Advance version will have everything that made the game great — all the levels from the original, as well as a cooperative mode for two players, and a deathmatch option for four players through the use of the link cable. And, of course, all the aliens that you can turn into Swiss cheese with your guns. After all, that's what the game's all about, right?



GOLDEN SUN ::

Publisher: Nintendo | Developer: Camelot | Genre: RPG | Release Date: 11/12/2001 | Street Price: \$29.99 | ESRB Rating: E

Role-playing games are an important fixture in any game system's library, since they're incredibly involving and last a good amount of time. *Golden Sun* has been in development for well more than a year now, and is one of the most anticipated RPGs of the system. *Golden Sun* has been developed by the same team responsible for the very popular *Shining Force* series on the Genesis, and it's obvious that the know-how learned from these games has been moved to the Game Boy Advance. *Golden Sun* will show Game Boy Advance owners just what's possible on the system, from its lush use of colors to its high-energy battle sequences with some of the most impressive magic effects this side of *Final Fantasy*. And, of course, the story itself will keep you enthralled throughout the adventure.



MARIO KART SUPER CIRCUIT ::

Publisher: Nintendo | Developer: Intelligent Systems | Genre: Racing | Release Date: 08/27/2001 | Street Price: \$29.99 | ESRB Rating: E

One of the most brilliant games released for the Super NES has been remade and re-released on the Game Boy Advance, and it's just as good — no, wait, better — than the original. *Mario Kart: Super Circuit* builds on the existing kart-racing formula established in the first game and expands on it for the handheld, showing off the system's 3D-like capabilities to almost its maximum. Players will be able to take control of several of their favorite Mario Bros. characters, from Yoshi to Bowser to Mario and Luigi themselves, each with their own racing style and attributes. More than 40 courses are tucked away in this cartridge, some hidden, so it will be a long time before any GBA gamer sees everything this game has to offer. Finally, four players can join in on the fun, even if only one player owns the cartridge!





not
available

SONIC THE HEDGEHOG ADVANCE

Publisher: Sega | Developer: Dimps | Genre: Platform | Release Date: 12/15/2001 |
Street Price: \$39.99 | ESRB Rating: E

Yes, the Game Boy Advance is a Nintendo system, and yes, Sonic is Sega's "mascot." In case you missed the news earlier in the year, Sega has made the smart choice and will produce games for every system on the market. That means that the Game Boy Advance is going to get an adventure starring the blue hedgehog as one of the first games in the company's new deal. The GBA version will be a brand new design based on the classic Genesis gameplay, while adding a few new elements that are more akin to the Dreamcast Sonic series. Sonic will be able to "grind" down ledges to keep his speed ridiculously high, and players will be able to swap out characters and use other critters like Tails, Knuckles, and Amy. And through the use of the Link Cable, four players can enter a challenge mode to see who's the fastest.

And through the use of the Link Cable, four players can enter a challenge mode to see who's the fastest.

SPYRO THE DRAGON

Publisher: Universal Interactive | Developer: Digital Eclipse | Genre: Action | Release Date: 11/07/2001 |
Street Price: \$39.99 | ESRB Rating: E

The purple dragon who's lived his first few years on the PlayStation is exploding off the big screen and shrinking down to fit in the palm of your hand. Spyro the Dragon is getting a handheld adventure this fall, bringing the senior platformer design to the Game Boy Advance. To mirror the original's feel on the portable, the developers have created an angled, isometric perspective to mimic a 3D world that Spyro can run, jump and glide through. Perform the necessary tasks and collect enough gems, and you'll be rewarded with a few hidden mini-games, including a level that sends the dragon in a 3D gliding challenge. One mini-game even puts you in control of Spyro's dragonfly buddy in a more shooter that's similar to the old arcade game Gauntlet. No multiplayer here, but the single player adventure will be more than enough to keep any dragon lover busy.

TEKKEN ADVANCE

Publisher: Namco | Developer: Namco | Genre: Fighting | Release Date: 12/2001 |
Street Price: \$39.99 | ESRB Rating: E

Namco's taking the huge plunge on the Nintendo handheld, showing off that the system has the right stuff by producing a handheld version of the company's biggest property. This is the first time the Tekken series has ever been moved off a PlayStation system, so it's a pretty special occasion for portable gamers. The Game Boy Advance version of Tekken will be a figuratively dumbed-down rendition of the console and arcade versions. The system doesn't have the horsepower to produce a 3D environment, so the developers are "tricking" the system with 2D effects to make the game look and feel as close to the original games in the series as possible. Unfortunately, a few main characters aren't going to make the cut due to the size of the cartridge, but one or two players will be able to duke it out with more than nine familiar faces through the use of the link cable and two copies of the game.

TONY HAWK'S PRO SKATER 2

Publisher: Activision | Developer: Vicarious Visions | Genre: Sports | Release Date: 06/11/2001 |
Street Price: \$3.99 | ESRB Rating: E

Though this is one of the first games ever developed for the Game Boy Advance, Tony Hawk's Pro Skater 2 still remains one of the most impressive in the system's library of titles. The developers have actually shrunk down the original console version into a portable edition, and boy is it pretty. It's also a ton of fun as long as you don't let the relatively high learning curve intimidate you. Players will be able to skate around seven different locations, pulling off hundreds of moves and thousands of combinations, all the while collecting items and performing tasks that will unlock hidden locations, characters, and cheats. Everything that can be done in the console version can also be pulled off on the Game Boy Advance... and while that might not sound like much, believe us - it's an incredible feat.

WARIO LAND 4

Publisher: Nintendo | Developer: Nintendo | Genre: Platform | Release Date: 11/19/2001 |
Street Price: \$49.99 | ESRB Rating: E

Nintendo has yet to offer an original Mario game for the Game Boy Advance. But that's quite all right, since it gives the plumber plenty of rest and puts other big characters in the limelight, including Mario's nemesis Wario. This "bad guy" is up to his old tricks, riding an ancient pyramid for all its treasures, and players will have to assume control of Wario so that he can get through all the rooms and score all the booty. It's not your traditional side-scroller, either, since players will have to utilize the enemies' attacks to their advantage to solve certain puzzles. Get stung by a giant bee, for example, and Wario will puff up and float in gain access to higher platforms. Of course, if enough damage is dealt, a handful of mini-games will be unlocked for added fun.



SUPER NES VS GAME BOY ADVANCE

→ screenshot comparison

It's obvious that, when Nintendo went to the drawing board to produce the next generation handheld system now known as the Game Boy Advance, the development team looked back at the Super NES for a model of what should be done. The GBA has several elements that have been borrowed from the original 16-bit system, such as shoulder buttons and pseudo-3D effects like Mode 7, which makes the system ideal for developers to bring back their old Super NES games for play on the handheld.

When the system was launched in June, Nintendo started the trend by releasing a portable conversion of *Super Mario Bros. 2*, titling it *Super Mario Advance*. The developers took the art assets from the Super NES edition, but moved around the enemies to make the game a lot more difficult to play... even for those who have already completed the original version. Majesco also jumped on the wagon during the system launch, releasing two direct Super NES ports: *Pitfall The Mayan Adventure* and *Earthworm Jim*. The company has also released *F-14 Tomcat* (a conversion of *Turn and Burn: No Fly Zone*), and will also produce *Earthworm Jim 2* in the next few months.

This holiday season gamers will also find Capcom producing SNES conversions for the GBA, most notably *Breath of Fire*, the popular role-playing game, and *Super Street Fighter II Turbo Reveal*, the last true fighting game using the *Street Fighter II* name. And, of course, the two-player street brawler *Final Fight* will be on shelves by the time you read this.

Next year, Nintendo will produce several games that derive from Super NES games. Early in the year GBA gamers will get a conversion of the first SNES game ever produced, *Super Mario World*, titled *Super Mario Advance 2*. Later in the year, Metroid fans should be thrilled to see a sequel for the GBA, tentatively titled *Metroid IV*. And Nintendo has also promised other games from its library, including two that star the popular green dinosaur: *Yoshi's Island* and *Yoshi's Story*.

Other companies have a few stray series revivals that were extremely popular on the 16-bit console. Konami will be bringing back its shooter series this holiday season with an original title, *Gradius Generations*. Kemco's also re-releasing its shooter from the SNES days, *Phaenix*, as well as a quirky, angled platform game known as *Crazy Chase* originally released on the system almost a decade ago.

So how do these portable ports stack up to their console predecessors? Check out these comparison pics to find out. The SNES version is on the left, the GBA pics are on the right.



Hey, look! It's a *Square* game on GBA! Resolution Differences aside, the Capcom-published *Breath of Fire* is a pixel-perfect conversion of the SNES original.



The Game Boy Advance version of *Earthworm Jim* may look almost exactly like the SNES game, but the animation and control aren't as good.



The GBA *Final Fight* One is actually a little better. All the characters are here and there's almost no slowdown.



Considered one of the best games of all time, *Super Mario World* returns in a pixel-perfect conversion on GBA as *Super Mario Advance 2*.



Pitfall: The Mayan Adventure on Game Boy Advance has been lightened up considerably - otherwise you'd get lost instantly.



Graphically, GBA's *Super Street Fighter II Turbo Reveal* is on par with the Super NES granddaddy. It only if it had those two extra buttons...



1-8 Banjo-Kazooie; 4-6 Sabrewulf; 7-9 Crash Bandicoot X/S; 10-12 Diddy Kong Pilot

The fun doesn't stop after the holidays, either. This is only the beginning for the Game Boy Advance – game developers are just barely scratching the surface of what the system can do, so you're going to see a ton of innovative and graphically impressive titles released in 2002 and beyond. And as companies get more familiar with the hardware, new graphic and gameplay techniques are bound to surface. Even though the system has stunning games already available, next year is going to be even bigger!

HOT PICKS FOR 2002

coming to game boy advance

BANJO-KAZOOIE

Publisher: Nintendo | Developer: Rare | Genre: Platform | Release Date: Spring 2002 | Street Price: TBA

You'll be happy to hear that Rare will be releasing a Game Boy Advance version of the popular Nintendo 64 series Banjo-Kazooie, moving the 3D gameplay of the console version over to the 2D-friendly portable hardware... which means all of the bird-and-bear duo's special abilities can be pulled off on the handheld version. The GBA title is actually a sequel to the original game on the Nintendo 64, with the story unfolding as if the Nintendo 64 sequel never happened.

CRASH BANDICOOT X/S

Publisher: Universal Interactive | Developer: Vicarious Visions | Genre: Platform | Release Date: Spring 2002 | Street Price: TBA

Then there's Universal Interactive's Crash Bandicoot X/S. The company is breaking this mousiepal out of the PlayStation arena and thrusting him onto the Game Boy Advance in the spring, and Tony Hawk GBA developer Vicarious Visions is making sure that the gameplay remains intact on the system. The game will move from side scroller to a pseudo-3D environment throughout the game, just like Crash's previous console adventures.

TONY HAWK'S PRO SKATER 3

Publisher: Activision | Developer: Vicarious Visions | Genre: Sports | Release Date: Spring 2002 | Street Price: TBA

Activision is also working on the follow-up to one of the top 10 games on the system. Tony Hawk's Pro Skater 3 is indeed coming out for the Game Boy Advance next spring, and the same development team responsible for the first GBA version has been brought back to work on the sequel. Though not much is known about the next-generation version, the game will be based on the same skateparks that will be introduced in the PlayStation, PlayStation 2 and GameCube versions of the game this year. We're also hoping for multiplayer modes and a create-a-player option, two items that were left out of the original for technical reasons.

As the holiday comes to a close, more titles for the system are started at the game studios, and since the development cycle for Game Boy Advance games is generally shorter than the rest of the industry's dev time, it's difficult to get a fix on GBA titles so far into the future. It's a good bet that, because these games aren't being rushed to make the holiday season, they're key players in what should be considered for purchase in 2002. But as always, you can keep track of each of the new titles entering development by checking out IGNpoker at <http://pocket.ign.com>

DIDDY KONG PILOT

Publisher: Nintendo | Developer: Rare | Genre: Racing | Release Date: Spring 2002 | Street Price: TBA

Rare, one of Nintendo's biggest second-party developers, is also big on the Game Boy Advance, though you won't see much out of them until early 2002. The company is working on a racing game, entitled Diddy Kong Pilot, which features characters from its Donkey Kong Country franchise. The game will utilize a motion sensor cartridge so that players can maneuver their plane in the 3D perspective just by tipping their systems.

MORTAL KOMBAT GBA

Publisher: Midway | Developer: Virtucraft LTD | Genre: Fighting | Release Date: Winter 2002 | Street Price: TBA

The classic fighter series from Midway, Mortal Kombat, will be making an appearance early next year as well. Though not much is known about what differences the Game Boy Advance version will have, we're sure that the company will utilize the existing library of Mortal Kombat games to produce the portable version, utilizing the same digitized actors and super violent animations that made the series so popular.

SABREWULF

Publisher: Nintendo | Developer: Rare | Genre: Adventure | Release Date: Spring 2002 | Street Price: TBA

Rare is keeping busy – very busy. In addition to Banjo-Kazooie and Diddy Kong Pilot, Rare is also working on a remake of a game from the '80s, called Sabrewulf. In this action title, you play an explorer that's out to grab Sabrewulf's treasure, but you'll have to devise a trap for when the angry lupine comes chasing after you! The game's being developed by several key members of the original Donkey Kong Country SNES team, so expect some serious use of the Game Boy Advance hardware throughout the adventure.



“love em’ AND hate em’”

With all the new consoles coming out, PC hardware isn't getting as much press; for the longest time, the only discernible blip on the horizon was the release of the GeForce 3 cards. Now that they've arrived, we've got to wait a while for the next big leap forward for the PC – although, as always, there are numerous smaller improvements in store for the platform between now and then. The current crop of consoles is slowly closing in on some of the PC's strengths (some say closing in on, others say trying to keep up with), but the PC still has a large advantage over the consoles. Let's take a look at what makes the PC so special...

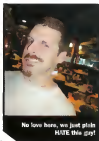
WHY WE LOVE THEM... The PC is still the home of two of gaming's biggest genres – first-person shooters and real time strategy games. The PC is also pretty much the only place where you can find really good simulations (although the console racing games are getting better and better). The PC also has a much stronger and more convenient online connection than your average console, which makes the growth of persistent state worlds and massively multiplayer games unique to the PC. **WHY WE HATE THEM...** But unless you've got a LAN and a few other systems handy, the PC isn't a great choice for party gaming. There are plenty of games that can be played by more than one person on the same machine, but multiplayer games on the PC are best played on separate machines since it's not always pleasant for four people to sit around a computer. Compounding this disadvantage is the fact that the PC is sorely lacking in fighting games.

WHY WE LOVE THEM... The control scheme on PCs is very sophisticated. The keyboard and mouse offer a level of control and a range of commands that you just can't find on the consoles; this is why strategy and shooter games work so well on the PC. The addition of joysticks, steering wheels, and game pads means you can match the game with the appropriate controller. **WHY WE HATE THEM...** After buying all the various peripherals you'll need, you quickly realize that the most obnoxious disadvantage to the PC is its price. Even a budget PC (which we've already assembled and priced on the coming pages) will run you around a thousand bucks. When the cost of a console is much lower, the argument for PC ownership begins to look pretty weak.

WHY WE LOVE THEM... Balanced against this limitation is the fact that the PC can stay on the cutting edge of technology. As better hardware becomes available, you can easily switch out a dated component for a new one. And while the brand new consoles are powerful, within six months of launch, they'll begin once again falling behind the latest PCs. **WHY WE HATE THEM...** Adding in the headaches of system compatibility and imprecise system specifications only makes things worse. Whereas a PlayStation title works on all PlayStations, a PC game will definitely not run the same way on different PCs. And although software engineers try to make a title as accessible as possible, on some systems, it may not even work at all. The involved bootup and install processes of the PC means delaying your gratification just a little longer than your console brethren, an especially troublesome fact for the lazy amongst us (all of us).

WHY WE LOVE THEM... Excessive main memory and hard disks are big plusses for the PC. While consoles are beginning to branch out into internalized hard drives and external secondary storage, the monster drives on the PC are already able to store an incredible amount of information and retrieve it in a rapid fashion. Better still, extra memory means a PC can handle several tasks at once. **WHY WE HATE THEM...** Cause they lock up at the most inopportune moments. Like when you're right in the middle of writing your stupid Holiday Guide, for instance.

WHY WE LOVE THEM... Hey, this is a gaming article, right? But there's no reason we can't pump up the PC for its other strengths. The connectivity and the keyboard and mouse interface are also ideally suited to browsing the internet or chatting online. Anyone who's ever tried to type something with a keyboard on their lap or coffee table can appreciate the value of sitting at a desk. The fact that PCs can double as business or production machines means that they're not toys. Okay, it's a toy but not just a toy.



No love here, we just plain HATE this guy!



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BUDGET SYSTEM :: (\$1115)

'Tis the season of giving, but are you working over-time just to give all your hard earned greenbacks away? Is that special someone special, but not \$4000 special? Contrary to popular belief, budgeting a computer certainly doesn't have to go hand-in-hand with sacrificing quality. With the prices of solid parts falling like pigeons exposed to L.A. smog, a financially savvy buyer can build his or her own high-end performance PC with minimal expenditure and associated headache. In fact, that's exactly the approach taken for our foundation, NVIDIA's nForce, its Integrated GeForce2 MX, Xbox quality audio processing unit, and advanced networking capabilities wrapped up in a speedy and affordable package make it irresistible to those wanting to milk their investment.

We also took the liberty of choosing the 1GHz Athlon and 256 MB of RAM to ensure a humming and smooth gaming experience through and through. A bit of splurging was done on the monitor, but when you're saving so much money on the overall package, why not treat yourself to the visuals only an iYama can offer. Who wants to get their Quake on screen, into a tiny 13" viewable screen, anyhow?

- Standard Case w/ 300 Watt Power Supply - \$50
- NVIDIA nForce Motherboard - \$140
- 1GHz AMD Athlon 1GHz CPU - \$100
- 256MB PC266 DDR SDRAM - \$50
- IBM Deskstar 80GXP 20GB Hard Drive - \$100
- Mitsumi IDE CD-ROM Drive - \$30
- TEAC Internal 3.5" Floppy Drive - \$15
- iYama Vision Master Pro 410 17" Monitor - \$350
- Basic Labtec Speakers - \$20
- Standard Keyboard - \$15
- Logitech Optical Wheel Mouse USB - \$20
- Sidewinder USB Game Pad - \$50
- Microsoft Windows XP Home Edition - \$200

HIGH-END SYSTEM :: (\$4225)

Dim the lights, crank the speakers, open the windows, and show your neighbors the true meaning of subtlety...as loud as you possibly can. It may be a four thousand dollar system, but when you play your favorite games at 1600x1200 resolution with no slowdown and a sound system that would make a deaf man hear and a hearing man deaf, you'll understand why the dream system is indeed the dream system.

At its heart is a processor that can cook a whole turkey. An unholy amount of RAM has also been included to run any and all programs, because why not buy as much as you can afford in this time when RAM is cheaper than bottled water? It'll make you the one most envied, and is always a bonus when attracting a mate. Spending no expense, we opted for the P4. While it barely manages to squeeze out the cheaper AMD solution, when money is no object, it's all about winning. It helps that titles also in development for the Xbox are far more likely to be optimized for the P4, and thusly more likely to outperform the same titles running on AMD systems.

- Pentium 4-compliant Case w/ 300 Watt Power Supply - \$200
- Abit TH7-RAMD Motherboard - \$200
- Intel Pentium 4 2GHz CPU - \$700
- 512MB PC800 RDRAM - \$380
- 2 IBM Deskstar 80GXP 40GB Hard Drives (Level 0 striping RAID array) - \$240
- Utopia 12X/40X DVD-ROM w/MPG2 Wr- \$160
- Flexstor PlexWriter 16/10/40A CDRW Drive - \$175
- TEAC Internal 3.5" Floppy Drive - \$15
- Hercules 3D Prophet III GF3 Titanium Video Card - \$380
- Creative Sound Blaster Audigy Platinum eX - \$250
- Linksys EtherLink XL PCI TX NIC - \$60
- iYama i23A True Flat 20" Monitor - \$900
- Logitech Z-560 Speakers - \$200
- Standard Keyboard - \$15
- Logitech Cordless Mouseman Dual Optical USB - \$70
- Saitek X-45 Joystick - \$80
- Thrustmaster Firestorm Dual Power Game Pad - \$30
- Microsoft Windows XP Home Edition - \$200

And all for just over a thousand bucks! You know, the money you save here will finally allow you the opportunity to get that costly heart surgery you've been putting off because it bit into your computer and next-gen console fund. Heck, write it off as a work expense! Everyone needs a computer, and what entrepreneurial boss can deny something described by both the words budget and bargain? Especially if you promise to get them one too...

It doesn't stop at the processor, though, as the rest of the system is comprised of awesome components: a GeForce 3 Titanium, because of its general graphical astuteness and again, the Xbox factor, sound and speakers to blow the roof off, a little level 0 striping RAID action for faster disk access than should be humanly possible, and even the top-of-the-line in mouse technology, Logitech's Dual Optical "rumble, rumble". Did we mention the \$900 True Flat iYama monitor? You just can't beat twenty inches of Return to Castle Wolfenstein.



TOP 10 PC GAMES

of the holiday season ▶▶▶

Trying to come up with just the right gift for the PC game player in your life is harder than it seems. Walk into any software store and you're instantly assaulted with hundreds of PC titles. So how do you separate the *Darkhanas* from the *Unreal Tournaments* of the world? We're kind of surprised (and a little embarrassed) that you even have to ask. The answer is simple: let us do the thinking for you!

Although this year saw the release of such big name titles as *Black & White* and *Max Payne*, the best is far from behind us. There are still a whole lot of titles to look forward to this year. With that in mind, the PC boys went out to a little cabin in Yosemite to do a little fishing, a little rock stacking, and to

come up with a list of the two dozen "must have" games for this holiday season. When they got back, they were told that they'd have to narrow it down to just ten essential titles for the holidays.

After a quick trip back up to the cabin (and a few untimely bear attacks) they managed to narrow the list down to ten best bets for pure gaming goodness for the time between now and the end of the year. The list isn't in any particular order (unless alphabetical is an order) so don't bother writing us about why your game is below another on the list. We've got enough aggravation as it is just trying to find the time to play all of these games (plus the ten others left at the cabin).



ARCANUM: OF STEAMWORKS AND MAGIC OBSCURE

Publisher: **Black Box** | Developer: **Troika** | Genre: **Adventure** | Release Date: **10/23/2001** | Street Price: **\$49.99** | ESRB Rating: **M**

In some ways, Arcanum is pretty traditional. But when the traditions you're following are those that made the Fallout series such a success, then maybe being traditional isn't such a bad thing. But Arcanum does break with the standard role-playing convention in its remarkable setting. In a Tolkien meets James Watt approach, Arcanum features the standard fantasy elves and wizards set (isometrically, no less) in a world of steampunk technology. Arcanum is definitely a title that will be enjoyed by most gamers, particularly those that liked Baldur's Gate or Planescape: Torment.



BATTLE REALMS

Publisher: **Chris** | Developer: **Evolution Games** | Genre: **Strategy** | Release Date: **1/10/2002** | Street Price: **\$49.99** | ESRB Rating: **M**

All day long Dan's like, "Battle Realms this, and Battle Realms that." In fact, Dan told us that he even wants to marry Battle Realms. If it will have him. While we think he shouldn't completely rule out the concept of a flesh bride, his choice of companion is hard to criticize. An Asian-themed, fantasy 3D real-time strategy game already has enough words in the description to get people interested, but with Battle Realms, there's even more goodness waiting within the game. Various clans, an engaging story and loads of style ensure Battle Realms will be a worthwhile title for any fan of real-time strategy.



CIVILIZATION III

Publisher: **Hasbro** | Developer: **Hasbro** | Genre: **Strategy** | Release Date: **2/1/2001** | Street Price: **\$49.99** | ESRB Rating: **R**

I don't understand anyone who isn't chomping at the bit (or is it chomping?) to get their hands on this one. The last of games that have taken up as much of our time as the last two Civilization games is short indeed. Like all the great empire-building games before it, the next evolution of Sid Meier's classic 4X series starts you with a simple band of settlers at the dawn of civilization. From those humble beginnings you're charged with leading your people into the far future through military conquest, economic dominance or technological superiority. I suppose peaceful coexistence is also a possibility — I suppose.



COMMAND & CONQUER RED ALERT 2: YURI'S REVENGE

Publisher: **Electronic Arts** | Developer: **Westwood** | Genre: **Strategy** | Release Date: **1/10/2001** | Street Price: **\$49.99** | ESRB Rating: **M**

The best 2D real-time strategy game of last year is due for some expansion with Yuri's Revenge. The new game picks up where Red Alert 2 left off (at least until some time machines are brought in and things get a little complicated). Yuri has broken with his Soviet masters after the Allied capture of Moscow. He now poses a threat to both the Allies and the Soviets with his army of mind-controlled mutant soldiers. You can take the side of either the Soviets or the Allies as they try to crush his psychic army. Perfect for Red Alert 2 fans (or anyone who has the first game).



EMPIRE EARTH

Publisher: **Sierra** | Developer: **Sierra** | Genre: **Strategy** | Release Date: **1/10/2001** | Street Price: **\$49.99** | ESRB Rating: **M**

This is another title on our list that has a lot of ambition. While Empire Earth isn't the first game to focus on war through history, it's the first that runs in 3D and in real-time. From simple spearmen to infantry squares to ironclad warships to the first jet-powered aircraft to futuristic mechanized robot soldiers, Empire Earth lets you unleash the armies of history on your unwitting enemies. Few strategy titles can really capture that sense of epic proportion. With all of history as a backdrop, Empire Earth more than fits the bill.

EUROPA UNIVERSALIS II

Publisher: **Sierra** | Developer: **JoWooGame** | Genre: **Strategy** | Release Date: **12/12/2001**
 Street Price: **\$49.95** | ESRB Rating: **M**

Strategy games often have to sacrifice details for breadth. But last year's *Europa Universalis* proved that you can have a sweeping historic, real-time empire building game that doesn't compromise on the details. Over four hundred years of history are recreated in the sequel, from the battles of Joan d'Arc to the decline of Napoleon. During that period you and over 180 other countries will engage in the religious struggles of the Reformation and colonize new lands in the race for emigration. Establish policies of mercantilism or free trade in order to realize the greatest return on your foreign holdings. Decide how much to centralize your government and how much power you give to local leaders. Your country's stability becomes an important consideration as the choices you make will alienate or inspire your population. And given the profound cultural, linguistic and religious differences among the disparate members of your commonwealth, no single policy is sure to please everyone.



MECHWARRIOR 4: BLACK KNIGHT

Publisher: **Electronic Arts** | Developer: **Electronic Arts** | Genre: **Action** | Release Date: **11/12/2001**
 Street Price: **\$49.95** | ESRB Rating: **M**

It's hard to beat a gigantic metal robot suit piloted by ordinary human beings — unless of course you've got a gigantic metal robot suit too. Then you're in for some real fun. Flattening forests under your feet as you fire off missile after missile towards your enemy or engaging in up-close combat with laser rifles and machine guns in the city streets is even more fun than it sounds. The new expansion (you need the original *MechWarrior 4: Vengeance* to play) features five new mechs and a Black Market where you can trade the salvage your enemies so obviously wanted you to have. Oh, right, and the game is awesome in multiplayer too.



NHL 2002

Publisher: **Electronic Arts** | Developer: **Electronic Arts** | Genre: **Sports** | Release Date: **11/12/2001**
 Street Price: **\$49.95** | ESRB Rating: **E**

We at IGN PC acknowledge the awesomeness of the PC format — but we've also got fond memories of sitting around playing NHL '94 on the Genesis. EA's NHL franchise has always been their best as far as we're concerned, and the 2002 version for the PC is no exception. Featuring complete rosters, smooth action and a cool new breakaway cam, NHL 2002 is a must-have for any sports fan. The "Face in the Game" feature lets you import your own photos and see what you would look like as a hockey-playing hobbit, too. How can you beat that?



RETURN TO CASTLE WOLFENSTEIN

Publisher: **Sierra** | Developer: **Sierra** | Genre: **Action** | Release Date: **10/12/2001**
 Street Price: **\$49.95** | ESRB Rating: **M**

You've played the multiplayer demo. And if you haven't, what's your problem anyway? I'll tell you what your problem is — you haven't experienced the awesome effects of storming a beach defended and dominated by an imposing German bunker. And unless you pick up *Return to Castle Wolfenstein*, you'll miss out on all kinds of other fun — like shootouts with Nazi zombies in a palm chateau or hiding from tanks in bombed out towers. As a long overdue sequel to the granddaddy of all first-person shooters, *Return to Castle Wolfenstein* will be a welcome addition to any action gamer's library.



TOM CLANCY'S GHOST RECON

Publisher: **Ubisoft** | Developer: **Ubisoft** | Genre: **Action** | Release Date: **11/12/2001**
 Street Price: **\$49.95** | ESRB Rating: **M**

Steve used to work for a guy whose wife used to be Tom Clancy's accountant, so there's no question of the latest Tom Clancy title's inclusion here. But even without the freakishly close and intimate relationship that Steve and Tom have, there's reason enough to include *Ghost Recon* on our holiday list: Rainbow Six took the first-person shooter to new levels of sophistication with unflinching realism. *Ghost Recon* escalates things by moving the action to a more military setting and passing out rocket launchers and claymores. Beautiful outdoor vistas and team-oriented tactical action ensure this one will get lots of attention when it arrives.





Master of Orion 3... Age of Mythology... Medal of Honor... PlanetSide... Shadowbane

If you aren't exactly sure that you really want to spend that hard earned cash on any of the titles that are being released this holiday season, don't worry too much. There are a number of PC game titles to look forward to in the months following the happiest time of the year. Here are a few that you can look forward to seeing on store shelves from the beginning of next year through the end of Summer 2002. Look on and salivate at what will be.

HOT PICKS FOR 2002

coming to pc

AGE OF MYTHOLOGY

Publisher: EA GAMES | Developer: Mythic Games | Genre: RTS
Release Date: Spring 2002 | Street Price: \$49.99 | ESRB Rating: T

With the age of the superluous RTS coming slowly to a close, the crime of the crop is starting to rise once again. Those with a flair for incredible gameplay and not just a little bit of creativity are going to succeed while their competitors pass into obscurity. Age of Mythology, the new 3D RTS from the folks that brought us the incredible Age of Empires series, combines their superior method of resource management and mechanics with the flair of some of Earth's more interesting mythological ideas. Make sure to keep your eyes peeled for this one next year.

BATTLEFIELD 1942

Publisher: Electronic Arts | Developer: Digital Battles | Genre: FPS
Release Date: Summer '02 | Street Price: \$29.99 | ESRB Rating: T

You've heard plenty about these realistic wargames as of late - titles like World War II Online and Operation Flashpoint. Well now EA is trying to step into the ranks with another jaunt into World War II. Gamers will be able to fight across maps that cover all areas of the war such as the Europe, the Philippines, and North Africa. All the vehicles, from boats to B-17s, will be usable in matches that include up to 64 players at a time. It looks like the level of detail is going to be very in-depth, with large maps and realistic terrain. Of course, some good teamwork will be necessary for success in multiplayer games. Those that like the single player experience won't leave disappointed either as 16 levels will ship with the game.

COMMAND & CONQUER: RENEGADE

Publisher: EA GAMES | Developer: Westwood Studios | Genre: RTS
Release Date: Spring 2002 | Street Price: \$49.99 | ESRB Rating: T

This one is of some special interest to those of us that have been playing the Command & Conquer series since its inception back in the early '90s. Known for games that had popularized real time strategy and resource management, it was pretty interesting to hear that the folks at Westwood would be bringing C&C into the first person as an action shooter. Some of the big draws will be a slew of interesting multiplayer options created using ideas from the RTS genre and the chance to see the units and buildings that were always tiny pixelized affairs now in full and glorious 3D. You'll even be able to run inside all of the buildings you've seen in the various C&C games. What we've seen of the game tells us that this is one we're going to be having some great battles with around the office.

DUNGEON SEIGE

Publisher: EA GAMES | Developer: EA GAMES | Genre: RPG
Release Date: Summer 2002 | Street Price: \$49.99 | ESRB Rating: T

There are a few games that all of us are equally excited about. Dungeon Siege is certainly one of them. We've seen the game grow from an exciting idea to a beautifully rendered game that when complete, could start a whole new craze for the RPG fanatics out there. Mixing role-playing with action and squad based strategy elements seems a pretty sure-fire path to success even if the system requirements might run a little high. If you've got it, flaunt it, we say.



MASTER OF ORION III

Publisher: Vivendi Games | Developer: Vivendi Games | Release Date: E3 2001 | Street Price: \$19.99 | ESRB Rating: RP

Bringing those old PC gamers back to the beginnings of epic strategy with another look at the incredible universe carved on from the original Master of Orion games. These were some of the first and best of the 4X titles that challenged you to rule and conquer the galaxy. In Master of Orion III, you're competing with several creatively strange alien species that are all over the same things you are. We can't wait to see more of how this series has evolved to fit the new standards of graphics and technology.

MEDAL OF HONOR: ALLIED ASSAULT

Publisher: Vivendi Games | Developer: EA GAMES | Genre: Action | Release Date: Early 2002 | Street Price: \$44.99 | ESRB Rating: R

Although Medal of Honor has been around for a while now, the renewed interest in wartime games will help to drive this Quake III engine powered shooter to new levels of excitement. Set in World War II, Allied Assault will have you running up the beachhead on D-Day, infiltrating enemy positions, and generally helping the Allies lay waste to the Axis powers. Just the opening cinematic, using the in-game engine, was enough to have folks lining up to see it at E3 2001. The game promises more of the same from the rest of the experience.

NEVERWINTER NIGHTS

Publisher: Atari | Developer: 3D Realms | Genre: RPG | Release Date: Spring 2002 | Street Price: \$49.99 | ESRB Rating: RP

One of the biggest movements in PC gaming as of late is the opportunity to let players design their own role-playing scenarios. This was and still is the case with most pen and paper RPGs, with dungeon masters creating scenarios out of thin air and his or her own imagination for other players to experience and enjoy. Neverwinter Nights should give those level designers and dungeon masters the opportunity to render their vision on the computer. With some amazing visuals and incredible editing tools, this could be the next big community game for RPG gamers. Those that have been big fans of Dungeons & Dragons could find this to be the game they've been waiting for.

PLANETSIDE

Publisher: Sony Online | Developer: Sony Online Entertainment | Genre: Action | Release Date: Late Summer/2002 | Street Price: TBA | ESRB Rating: RP

While it's not coming out until summer or fall of next year, we think this one deserves to be watched closely. What you'll find in PlanetSide is the first persistent online first-person shooter. This may sound like a huge project with the chance for some really interesting gameplay – and it is. Hundreds if not thousands of people will be able to fight across several continents while trying to lay claim to as much territory as possible in the name of their faction. All manner of weapons, vehicles, and special items will come with the game, along with the opportunity for quest-like missions and advancement in rank. Verant looks to be going all out with

this one, and with their knowledge of massively multiplayer games from their experience with EverQuest, they have a good chance of pulling off this very ambitious project without too many problems. Look for this one to hit beta sometime in the spring and take however long it takes to kill all of the bugs. Then get ready for some serious action gaming.

SHADOWWANE

Publisher: Sony Online | Developer: Trip Tucker Studios | Genre: RPG | Release Date: Spring 2002 | Street Price: TBA | ESRB Rating: RP

It's hard to know which of the billions of massively multiplayer online role-playing games to look forward to over the next year or so, but if we had to pick one, Shadowwane would be near the top of the list. In a unique player-versus-player experience, gamers will get the chance to join sides in what will be epic medieval battles with siege engines and hundreds of combatants. And with the addition of RTS elements, Wolfpack has some really interesting ideas that could prove to be the next significant step in the evolution of MMORPGs.

SIMS ONLINE

Publisher: EA GAMES | Developer: Maxis | Genre: Simulation | Release Date: Spring 2002 | Street Price: TBA | ESRB Rating: RP

What else can we say? The Sims has been on the best sellers list for over a year and a half, and it shows no sign of slowing down. The quirky fun of creating a little simulation personality will be transferred into an online arena where you can use your own sim to interact with other folks from around the world and have all of the sunny fun you could possibly hope for.

STAR WARS JEDI OUTCAST: JEDI KNIGHT II

Publisher: LucasArts | Developer: nVidia | Genre: Action | Release Date: Spring 2002 | Street Price: TBA | ESRB Rating: RP

Star Wars is undoubtedly one of the greatest franchises in the world. And while its name has been sullied recently by some less than desirable games, the addition of Jedi Knight II should bring it back from the brink of mediocrity. The fact that veteran development studio Raven is behind the curtains of this one gives us a great amount of hope. What we've seen has been very true to the license and extraordinarily beautiful. The chance to put gamers back into the shoes of a Jedi will undoubtedly have throngs running toward the stores.

WARCRAFT III: REIGN OF CHAOS

Publisher/Developer: Blizzard Entertainment | Genre: Strategy | Release Date: Early 2002 | Street Price: TBA | ESRB Rating: RP

You can't go too far in the PC gaming realm without hearing of the popularity and strength of the Blizzard lineup. The newest addition, due out next spring, should help to further cement their place in the annals of gaming history. Warcraft III will bring both faithful and newcomer alike into the realm of Azeroth where a magical war for the fate of the world plays out through your mastery of strategy with four unique playable races with tons of specialized units for all sorts of incredible strategic options.

While these are the ones that immediately popped into our minds as choices to look forward to in the future, the list goes on with more hot titles in the coming months after the holiday season passes us up. So here are some of the others keep an eye on after the holiday season, through the spring and into early summer of 2002: *Earth and Beyond*, *Freedom Force*, *Global Operations*, *Sigma: The Adventures of Chance Rex*, *Elder Scrolls III: Morrowind*, and *Soldier of Fortune II: Double Helix*. Remember to keep your eyes open for more in depth info on each of these titles by visiting the IGN PC at <http://pc.ign.com>.

TOP 10 DVDs

of the holiday season >>>

Being DVD fans since the format was introduced, we've watched the little silver discs grow from a niche home theater item to what is quickly becoming the new standard for home entertainment.

Something that is helping the DVD industry become even larger is the fact that you can play the discs on so many different devices. DVD players and PC DVD-ROM drives were the natural first steps, but now even some videogame consoles can play DVD movies.

Since both the PS2 and Xbox will be high on many of your holiday lists this season, we've compiled a list of the 10 best DVDs that you'll want to pop in your favorite DVD-compatible console. These discs are not only major releases, but they also have plenty of special features and extras to show off just what your new player can do.



:: FINAL FANTASY: SPECIAL EDITION

Director: Motonori Sakakibara, Hiroshi Sakaguchi | Publisher: Columbia TriStar | Release Date: 10/23/2001 | Genre: Animation | Street Price: \$29.95 | Rating: PG-13 | Running Time: 108 minutes

Starring: Alec Baldwin, Steve Buscemi, Ming Na Wen, Ving Rhames, James Woods
Final Fantasy: The Spirits Within stunned audiences all over the world (even us jaded chumps here at IGN) with its photo-realistic animation. This DVD looks to be a must-have for fans of the movie or videogame series. Two discs will contain two feature-length commentaries, an isolated score, storyboards with commentary, custom animations, a music video, an alternate opening, a mini-movie of Akira's dream, a virtual tour of Square Pictures, and several workshops covering character profiles, matte art, sets and props, and more. The entire screenplay of the film is also included along with an interactive documentary: *The Making of Final Fantasy: The Spirits Within*.

:: THE GODFATHER DVD COLLECTION

Director: Francis Ford Coppola | Publisher: Paramount Pictures | Release Date: 10/09/2001 | Genre: Drama/Crime | Street Price: \$105.90 | Rating: R | Running Time: 725 minutes

Starring: Marlon Brando, Al Pacino, Robert De Niro, Diane Keaton, Robert Duvall
The Godfather is the ultimate mafia flick, launching Al Pacino's long career and landing Francis Ford Coppola on the map. This five-disc collection is filled with more than 12 hours of feature films, documentaries, deleted footage, the Corleone family tree, Coppola's commentary, production stills and storyboards, Academy Award acceptance speeches, and more.

:: PLANET OF THE APES (2001)

Director: Tim Burton | Publisher: Fox | Release Date: 11/20/2001 | Genre: Action | Street Price: \$29.98 | Rating: PG-13 | Running Time: 124 minutes

Starring: Mark Wahlberg, Helena Bonham Carter, Tim Roth
You'd have to be living under a rock not to know that Tim Burton revisited the classic film from nearly 30 years ago. While the results were mixed, Fox is nevertheless putting out a two-disc special edition of the film packed full of love-iness such as a commentary by composer Danny Elfman, an interactive behind-the-scenes feature, six short documentaries, eight multi-angle looks at sequences in the film, five extended scenes, HBO's "Making Of" special, a music video, and some split-screen vignettes about make-up, stunts, etc. All of this is in a widescreen anamorphic transfer with a host of sound output options.

:: SHREK

Director: Andrew Adamson, Vicky Jensen | Publisher: DreamWorks | Release Date: 11/02/2001 | Genre: Comedy/Animation | Street Price: \$25.99 | Rating: PG | Running Time: 93 minutes

Starring: Mike Myers, Eddie Murphy, Cameron Diaz, John Lithgow
The two-disc Shrek release is a guaranteed winner, packed full of extras. There's a behind-the-scenes featurette, the Game Swamp (15+ interactive games), Shrek's Music Hall, Donkey's Read-Along, interviews, commentary, technical gobs, hints for the Xbox Shrek game, production notes, trailers, a character design progression reel, deleted scenes and storyboards, and of course an anamorphic presentation. There will also be a DTS version of the film included for you true audiophiles.



THE SIMPSONS - THE COMPLETE FIRST SEASON ::

Director: Various | **Publisher:** Fox | **Release Date:** 09/25/2001 | **Genre:** Comedy/Animation | **Street Price:** \$39.99 | **Rating:** NR | **Running Time:** 420+ minutes

Starring: Dan Castellaneta, Julie Kavner, Nancy Cartwright, Yeardley Smith, Hank Azaria, Harry Shearer
This three-disc ultimate treat for The Simpsons fans contains the entire first season: 13 episodes of Simpsons goodness. Along with the commercial-free episodes comes an impressive amount of extra content, including commentary tracks on each episode, scripts from several of the episodes, an animatic with commentary, Albert Brooks outtakes, an unused episode, 100 early sketches by Matt Groening and others, a BBC special, the Bart T-shirt controversy, an early version that played on the Tracey Ullman Show, voice outtakes, and some foreign language clips.

SNOW WHITE AND THE SEVEN DWARFS PLATINUM EDITION ::

Director: David Hand | **Publisher:** Disney Studios | **Release Date:** 10/09/2001 | **Genre:** Animation | **Street Price:** \$29.99 | **Rating:** G | **Running Time:** 84 minutes

Starring: Adriana Caselotti, Harry Stockwell
Snow White? Have we gone soft? Not really. We chose this Disney classic because of the sheer volume of extras content. We don't have enough space to run down all of the features, but this two-disc version of the film includes: a commentary reconstructed from tapings of Walt Disney himself, all kinds of interactive content and games, the Brothers Grimm original version, a visual development gallery, abandoned design concepts, stills, a new recording by Barbara Streisand, inside the DVD restoration process, four deleted scenes, vintage black and white Disney shorts, and so much more. Basically if it has anything to do with Snow White, it's in here!

STAR WARS EPISODE I: THE PHANTOM MENACE ::

Director: George Lucas | **Publisher:** Fox/Lucasfilm | **Release Date:** 10/16/2001 | **Genre:** Fantasy/Action | **Street Price:** \$29.99 | **Rating:** PG | **Running Time:** 133 minutes

Starring: Liam Neeson, Ewan McGregor
Say what you will about Star Wars Episode I: The Phantom Menace itself, but the video and audio on the DVD is refer once quality. A widescreen anamorphic transfer, an hour-long documentary, the infamous starwars.com web documentaries, deleted scenes, two theatrical and seven television spots, multi-angle animatics, production photos, as well as a running audio commentary by Lucas himself makes this one a must-have. If future Lucasfilm releases (Indiana Jones, The Star Wars Trilogy, etc.) have this level of quality and attention, DVD aficionados are in for a treat.

SWORDFISH: SPECIAL EDITION ::

Director: Dominique Sena | **Publisher:** Warner Brothers | **Release Date:** 10/30/2001 | **Genre:** Action | **Street Price:** \$24.98 | **Rating:** R | **Running Time:** 99 minutes

Starring: John Travolta, Hugh Jackman, Halle Berry, Don Cheadle
Of all the picks in this buyer's guide, this one will probably raise the most eyebrows. The movie itself wasn't particularly memorable or earth-shaking, but it is custom-made for the DVD format. Whether it's the amazingly realized opening sequence, the drum-tight sound editing, or the picture-perfect gorgeousness of the film itself, the super-violent Swordfish is probably the last loud bang of an action movie until at least next summer. The Special Edition DVD sports two documentaries, three alternate endings, theatrical trailers, and feature-length commentaries.

THE TERMINATOR: SPECIAL EDITION ::

Director: James Cameron | **Publisher:** MGM | **Release Date:** 10/02/2001 | **Genre:** Action | **Street Price:** \$26.98 | **Rating:** R | **Running Time:** 107 minutes

Starring: Arnold Schwarzenegger, Linda Hamilton, Michael Biehn
The biggest news about this release is a completely new 5.1 audio remaster which sounds stunningly rich. The transfer is anamorphic, and video quality is also very crisp. Terminator fans will find two documentaries about the film, including some new interviews with James Cameron. Cameron also appears on the commentary tracks to some never-before-seen deleted scenes. Finally, as an extra treat, how about a heap of trailers, TV spots, and storyboards?

THE X-FILES: THE COMPLETE FOURTH SEASON ::

Director: Various | **Publisher:** Fox | **Release Date:** 11/13/2001 | **Genre:** Science Fiction/Television | **Street Price:** \$149.98 | **Rating:** NR | **Running Time:** 900+ minutes

Starring: Arnold Schwarzenegger, Linda Hamilton, Michael Biehn
With so many good DVDs hitting shelves these days, paying more than \$100 for any DVD box set is painful to do. Still, if any package deserves your milk money, it has to be the fourth season of The X-Files. This seven-disc humdinger from Fox follows the gold standard already set by the first three season releases: episode commentaries, a whole mess of deleted and extended scenes, interviews with Chris Carter and Frank Spotnitz, the continuing "Behind the Truth" documentary, and a special effects commentary.



THE CONSOLE CONNECTION Breakin' it down so you can start hookin' it up.

So you just got a brand new next generation console that supports Dolby Digital 5.1, DTS, progressive scan, and DVD playback. The only problem is, you don't know how to hook it up to get the best sound and picture out of your console. Fret no more! We've worked up a handy little guide to help you figure out what goes where and which connection is the best choice for the job. The names of these cables might be unfamiliar, but it's not complicated and a rudimentary understanding will help you optimize your gaming rig.

Cables are designed to do one thing: carry a signal from point A to point B. Good cables perform this task with a minimum of signal degradation. However, degradation can also come from external forces. For this reason, you should keep two things in mind during installation: keep cable runs as short as possible and run your cables as neatly as possible. Speaker cables and interconnects (wires that connect two components) don't like to be crisscrossed with power lines. These rules will not only help maintain clear signals, but will also make for a generally better-looking gaming area.



COMPOSITE / RCA CABLES ::

We group these cables together because they're really go hand in hand. These are the freebies you get with any system. The yellow strand (composite) carries the video signal; the red and white strands (RCA) carry the left and right sections of the stereo signal. The only console owners who should be excited about RCA audio connects are GameCube owners, as Pro Logic/Pro Logic II only needs a two-channel signal to work its magic.



S-VIDEO ::

As the name implies, S-video (the "s" stands for "super") is a video-only cable. The difference between S-video and composite is immediately noticeable — color and clarity are both much improved. The video signal is split into two parts in an S-video cable: brightness and color. If you have a TV that accepts an S-video signal, then you would be wise to use it. Your games will look a lot better.



COMPONENT ::

The top of the heap for video connections, component cables improve upon S-video by further splitting the signal. Like S-video, one strand is dedicated to brightness. The color, however, is split between two cables. Unless you are using component cables to link an Xbox or GameCube, both of which can output a progressive scan image, to a TV that can accept a 480p signal, the improvement won't be as dramatic as the step-up from composite to S-video. Nonetheless, component provides the best image possible.



DIGITAL OPTICAL ::

This strange-looking cable is used to carry audio signals. Unlike an RCA cable, which sends the electronic signal along a metal wire, the signal in a digital optical cable is a beam of light bounced down a plastic shaft. In fact, if you plug such a wire into a source device, you can see the red light coming out the other end. Digital optical is typically used for multi-channel applications, but it can carry a simple stereo signal as well. If you plan on using your Xbox or PS2 in a surround sound system, then this is the connection you will be using.

Don't worry about unfamiliar-looking cables and strange terms, because we've taken the headache out of hooking up that new system you just got for the holidays. Just follow the steps we've outlined on the following page and you should be up and gaming with the optimal setup in mere minutes.

Just a word of warning, though. Don't forget to turn your console OFF before you start attaching any cables. Messing with wires and connections while your console is turned on can be very dangerous, and you can hurt your system as well as yourself. Better yet, unplugging your system from the wall outlet entirely will guarantee that neither you nor your system will be in danger of a nasty electrical shock while you hook it up. Just between us, Doug Perry used to have a full head of hair before messing around with the back of his PS2 while it was plugged it — now he's as bald as Mr. Clean.

GAMECUBE ::



Step 1

Connect your A/V cables to the GameCube outputs. There are only two outputs and configuring this system is very simple. The digital out is used only if you are using the progressive scan image. The analog audio out is used in every situation, as the GameCube can only output two-channel sound.

Step 2

Connect your video cable/s to your TV or receiver. If you are only using a GameCube, then you can connect directly to your TV. If you plan on maintaining several console connections, then connect to your receiver so that you can switch between all your systems without having to reconnect everything. If you're using the optional component cable, you still need the RCA cable for sound—but the yellow component connector isn't used in this case.

Step 3

Connect your audio cables. Not much to think about in this step, as the GameCube only has one type of audio output, and every one can use it: good old RCA. Like the video scenario, you can connect directly to your TV or plug into a channel on your receiver. Check all connections and then turn everything on. If you are using a receiver, make sure you have the correct input selected. If you are going directly to a TV... well, in that case you wouldn't even be reading this, would you?

PLAYSTATION 2 ::



Step 1

With the PS2, there are many choices, but really only two configurations. The Multi A/V output sends both audio and video; the digital optical output sends audio only. The only situation in which you must use both outputs is if you opt for the component cables, in which case the whole of the Multi A/V output is used for video. Keep in mind that you can use the optical output with even the standard A/V cables. You simply wouldn't connect the RCA audio cables. This would be the scheme if you had a surround sound audio system but an older TV.

Step 2

Connect your video cable/s (composite, S-video, or component) to your TV or receiver. If you only have one console, then you can plug it directly to your TV. If you have several consoles, then you should go through your receiver so that you don't have to redo everything each time you play a different system.

Step 3

Connect your audio cable/s to your TV or receiver. If you're going directly to your TV, then simply attach the RCA cables to the inputs. If you have a Dolby Digital or DTS receiver, then connect the digital optical cable to the optical input. Remember that the optical cable can carry any type of audio signal (stereo or surround). Almost every game supports audio output through the optical connection, but there are some old PS2 games that won't work, like *Sky Odyssey*.

XBOX ::



Step 1

Connect your A/V box or standard cable to the back of your Xbox. These modules make this step very easy. You either use the included cable, the Advanced AV Pack, or the High Definition AV Pack—depending on what type of equipment you have. The Xbox itself has only one output, so this step is pretty straightforward.

Step 2

Connect your video cable/s. The standard cable uses composite; the Advanced AV Pack has S-video and composite (you only use one, though); the High Definition AV Pack has component output. If you've got an HDTV, component is of course the way to go. Again, you can either go right to the TV or switch through a receiver. The second choice will let you keep several consoles hooked up at the same time. Alternatively, some third party peripheral makers also offer switch boxes with multiple inputs.

Step 3

Connect your audio cable/s. You will either use RCA or digital optical, depending on what your home system can handle. Thankfully, every configuration allows for standard RCA. Digital optical is an option with the two higher-end AV Packs. If you have a surround sound system capable of Dolby Digital and/or DTS, then you'll definitely want to use the digital optical cable, as that's the only way to send a multi-channel signal. Check that the cables are firmly attached and play away.

As you can see, there's not that much to it. Just remember that, depending on which system you're using, there will be specific options for playback. For instance, if you're watching a DVD on your PS2 you might have to go into the options menu to activate Dolby Digital output. To use the progressive scan feature on GameCube, hold the B Button upon boot-up (this will work only with games that support it). Check your instruction manual for more. Each of these platforms has the potential to be a stunning a/v system. It's really up to you to (1) invest in appropriate equipment, and (2) take the time to check and recheck your connections. The technology might be new to you, but don't let it scare you. Pay attention to what you're doing and you'll be in gaming nirvana in no time at all.

For more information on hooking up your consoles as well as the latest audio and video products, check <http://gear.ign.com>.

GEAR ACCESSORIES

Picking up a new system kicks ass. However, the fun doesn't have to stop there. And we're not only talking about installation, though that can be enjoyable as well (although maybe only us dedicated gearheads can say that we truly "enjoy" A/V installation). We're talking about the icing on the cake: accessories.

This, of course, can be anything from an A/V system for your car to a pair of gloves that you just really like to wear while gaming. Thanks to the incredible processing power of next-generation consoles, you have more options than ever.

Admittedly, this is sort of a mixed blessing: More options mean more money. There's no debating that, but wouldn't you rather have more choice? Not many of us will be able to go down this list and simply buy everything. However, there are probably one or two things that will really float your boat.

This is by no means a complete list, either; there's not enough room in the entire magazine for that. The following products represent a sampling of some of the more exciting and useful goods out there. And all of these products will be widely available as of our print date, so if you're reading this, then you can get them.

AVerTV BOX ::

Manufacturer: AVer Media | **Platform:** All | **Street Price:** \$159.99

So you blew your nest egg on consoles and games. Now what are you going to play it on? If, like many of us, you're still saving for that dream A/V system, then you might not have an HDTV and full-blown 5.1 channel rig yet. However, that doesn't mean there aren't options available in the meantime. Enter AVer Media, developer of a device that lets users harness the natural display power of a computer monitor and use it for their console. Loaded with plenty of inputs and outputs, the AVer can be used with any next-generation console.

For such a small product, the rear of the AVer is well populated. Video inputs include one component, one S-video, one composite, and one VGA, which connects to your video card so that you don't have to change connections in order to use your computer. There is also one VGA output, which (you guessed it) connects to your monitor. The audio scheme is respectable but noticeably less sophisticated: two 1/8th-inch inputs, one for front and one for surround. Lastly, there is an antenna connection. Yes, you can even watch TV on your monitor by using the AVer as a tuner. A hatch around front reveals additional connections: one set of RCA ins and one set of RCA outs.

KENWOOD VR-509 ::

Manufacturer: Kenwood | **Platform:** All | **Street Price:** \$450.00

A receiver is both the brawn and the brain of an A/V system, not to mention that it's the hardest working component of any rig. And as intimidating as learning to operate a complex receiver might seem, shopping for one often proves to be the truly frustrating step. Luckily, you have IGN.

Of course, you're not getting a receiver for videogames alone. Luckily, the technologies needed for gaming are the same as those needed for surround sound in general. Thinking of a receiver purchase as an investment in your home entertainment system will also make the purchase more palatable in general.

The Kenwood VR-509 offers Dolby Digital, DTS, and PULI decoding, not to mention 100 WPC across all five channels, which is more than enough power to fill an average-size room. The back of the unit has enough inputs and outputs for all but the most overstocked A/V fanatic. Inputs include two component, four S-video, and four composite for video and both digital optical and a slew of RCA's for audio. The 509 also comes with a very sophisticated remote control.

The receiver is widely available for about \$450.00, which is very reasonable considering how powerful it is.





RUMBLE-FX HEADPHONES ::

Manufacturer: Evergreen Technologies | Platform: All | Street Price: \$50.00

It's a shame, but you can't always have your system blaring. There are simply too many things against you: family members, sleeping spouses, edgy landlords, etc. However, this doesn't mean that the audio aspect of gaming has to be any less dramatic.

The RumbleFX cans—that's what we audio folks call headphones—sound great and are very comfy, but that's not what sets them apart from the crowd. The earcups on these cans actually vibrate, quite forcibly, along with the bass. And this is not a gentle purr; this is a powerful, head-shaking action. Luckily, you can select from two levels of intensity, or simply turn off the rumble function altogether.

The motors work hard enough that they need their own power source. About halfway down the cable there is a compartment that houses two AAA batteries. Thankfully, this adds a minimum of weight to the equation. If you have to keep it to yourself, then this is the way to do it.



INTERACT MOBILE MONITOR FOR GCN ::

Manufacturer: InterAct | Platform: GameCube | Street Price: \$149.95

Third-party hardware manufacturer Interact Accessories has turned Nintendo's GameCube into a portable system with the firm's release of the Mobile Monitor for the console. The device, an attachable 5.4-inch color LCD screen, hooks to the back of the GameCube and serves as a mini-television for the platform. The monitor comes complete with two stereo speakers, two headphone jacks, and controls for color and volume. A car adapter is also included in the package so that gamers needn't worry about losing battery power during the six-hour drive to see grandma. The entire portable setup can be whipped up now at a retailer near you for approximately \$149.95. Interact will also release a battery (\$49.95) capable of powering GameCube for more than two hours in mid-December. Controllers and copy of Super Smash Bros. not included.



PANASONIC CT-36HX41 TAU TV ::

Manufacturer: Panasonic | Platform: All | Street Price: \$2000.00

All right, it may be a bit obscene to include a \$2,000 accessory on this page, but if your pockets are deep enough...

If Tony Soprano had a TV for videogames, then this would be it. Consider the 36-inch Tau, the Lincoln Continental of CRT TVs. Home theater buffs might snub their noses at the prospect of putting up this kind of dough for a 4:3 set, but 16:9 just isn't optimal for gaming.

GameCube and Xbox owners will be happy to know that the Tau is comfortable with both 1080i and 480p images; the progressive scan outputs of these systems will find happy homes on this monster. And if you've ever played on a flat-screen TV, you know that it's difficult to go back to the land of curvature.

Console collectors will find inputs enough for constant connection of everything in the closet: two sets of component video, four sets of normal A/V, and three S-video hookups. Add to this an internal line doubler, a 3D comb filter, and Spatializer 3D Surround Sound (in case your 5.1 system is on the fritz) and you can see why this set comes highly recommended.



DVD REMOTE CONTROLS ::

Manufacturer: Various | Platform: Various | Street Price: \$20.00 - \$30.00

Attention GameCube owners: skip now to the next section, as we don't want to make you jealous at the thought of other console folks enjoying DVD movies on their systems.

Minions of Sony and Microsoft, though, will seriously want to consider picking up a remote for their system. You don't technically need one to play movies on the PS2, but it makes it a hell of a lot easier. InterAct's DVD Master Remote (\$20) not only controls movies, but also works as a universal TV clicker. The receiver plugs into a controller port and you can send it signals from up to 23 feet away.

Xbox owners don't have as much freedom in this department. Microsoft's own DVD Movie Playback Kit is required hardware for DVD enjoyment. Like the previous remote, the receiver simply snaps into a controller port and you're ready to start the show. The kit will be available at launch for \$30.

IGN.com is more than just a bunch of fat, dumb editors and artists with bad haircuts and no lives. We have over 10 million monthly readers, and we wanted to dedicate at least a bit of the first IGN.com The Magazine to those of you who make IGN.com what it is - a thriving community. Sure, we have fun writing about games, movies, and the like, but without someone to write to, we would be nothing, so this section of the magazine is dedicated to you - our readers. Can you feel this love? Or hate?

IGN BOARDS ::

As of this writing nearly 20 million messages have been posted on the IGN Boards since their inception just over a year ago, making them one of the most active message systems on the entire Internet. If you're not on the IGN Boards, here are just a few of the most popular sections that you're missing:

BOARD	# POSTS 10/8/01, 6pm
Nintendo GameCube General Board	702,807
PlayStation 2 General Board	514,929
Xbox General Board	284,055
PlayStation 2 Community Board	205,962
IGN Community Board	193,481

If you want to see what the IGN Boards are all about, stop by <http://boards.ign.com>. It may take you a while to read all 20 million messages, so stock up on the Visa and coffee.

MOST POSTS ::

You're probably wondering, "why would I waste my time on the IGN message boards?" Well, perhaps you should log on and ask one of our top posters:

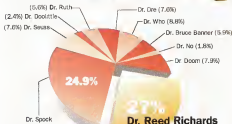
RANK	BOARD MEMBER	# POSTS 10/8/01, 6pm
25.	CharlesStradamus	10,533
24.	TWINSJAKE	10,580
23.	smartazz_2	10,960
22.	brilliant	11,076
21.	ValorPhoenix	11,235
20.	h_e_o_t_e_r_o	11,630
19.	Roguesal	11,727
18.	vishung	11,838
17.	personer	11,858
16.	jtbellar	11,902
15.	SaffronsGhost	12,044
14.	deathscythe custom	12,099
13.	thebusiness	12,155
12.	scitakehi	12,381
11.	Digital_Audiophile	12,526
10.	gskater	12,540
9.	Squalid	12,818
8.	drkay	12,908
7.	Skater_joe	13,570
6.	TML8614	13,728
5.	mngalatee	14,063
4.	yab	18,039
3.	objohnshinobi	20,462
2.	ARIZCATS	20,951



And the most active user and self-proclaimed "biggest knop on the boards" - balibum with 21,837 posts

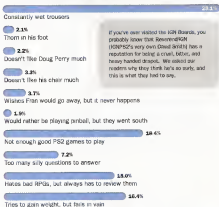
IGNORANT POLLS ::

Who would you trust to give you a medical exam?



poll has to send the price in dollars, or

Why is Reverend-IGN so mean and nasty?



If you've ever visited the IGN Boards, you probably know that Reverend-IGN (IGNPS2's very own Great Smith) has a reputation for being a cruel, bitter, and heavy handed dropout. We asked our readers why they think he's so surly, and this is what they had to say.



Where in the world is Matt Casamassina?

IGN OFFICE TOUR ::

While you can keep an eye on the happenings at the IGN compound through the online FlyCams at <http://insider.ign.com/flycam.html>, you never truly get the full picture of what's going on outside of the range of the Web cams. That's why we sent a fearless photographer through the lair of the IGN editors to not only capture images, but to also capture the true feel of what a typical day at IGN is like. Here's just a few candid shots that our loathsome photographer captured while on an excursion through the squalid IGN den of depravity.



It's not always about the game. Sometimes it's about the game.



It's not always about the game. Sometimes it's about the game.



It's not always about the game. Sometimes it's about the game.



It's not always about the game. Sometimes it's about the game.



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It's not always about the game. Sometimes it's about the game.



It's not always about the game. Sometimes it's about the game.



It's not always about the game. Sometimes it's about the game.



It's not always about the game. Sometimes it's about the game.



It's not always about the game. Sometimes it's about the game.

[illegible]

[illegible]

Where in the world is Matt Casamassima?



Homeroom
ROCKED!

PARTING SHOT IGN YEARBOOK

Stay Sweet!
Roxo

Spence Abbot
Dan Adams
Scotty Agrella
Scott Allen
Jason Bates



Talmadge Blevins
Aaron Boulding
Steven Butts
Matthew Casamassina
Christopher Carle



K.I.T.
YOU KNOW
DA #

Anthony Chau
Jeremy Conrad
Ryan Jennings
Craig Harris
Mike Hawkins



SEE YOU ON
THE BUS!

Philip Hereso
Steven Horn
Sarah Kuhn
Vincent Q. Lopez, esq.
Sir Francisco Mirabella XXIII



RATS.

Douglass Perry
PickleBoy
Peer Schneider
Scott Senkowski
David Smith



Cherleaders
Rule

Martin Smith
Ivan Sulic
David Veloria
Michael Wiley
Davidson Zdyrko



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